

THE *E. g. 12. Th.*
WORKS
OF THE

Reverend and Learned
JOHN SCOTT, D.D.

Some time RECTOR of St. Giles's in the Fields.

In TWO VOLUMES.

CONTAINING
The Several PARTS of the
CHRISTIAN LIFE,
WITH HIS
SERMONS and DISCOURSES
Upon many Important SUBJECTS.

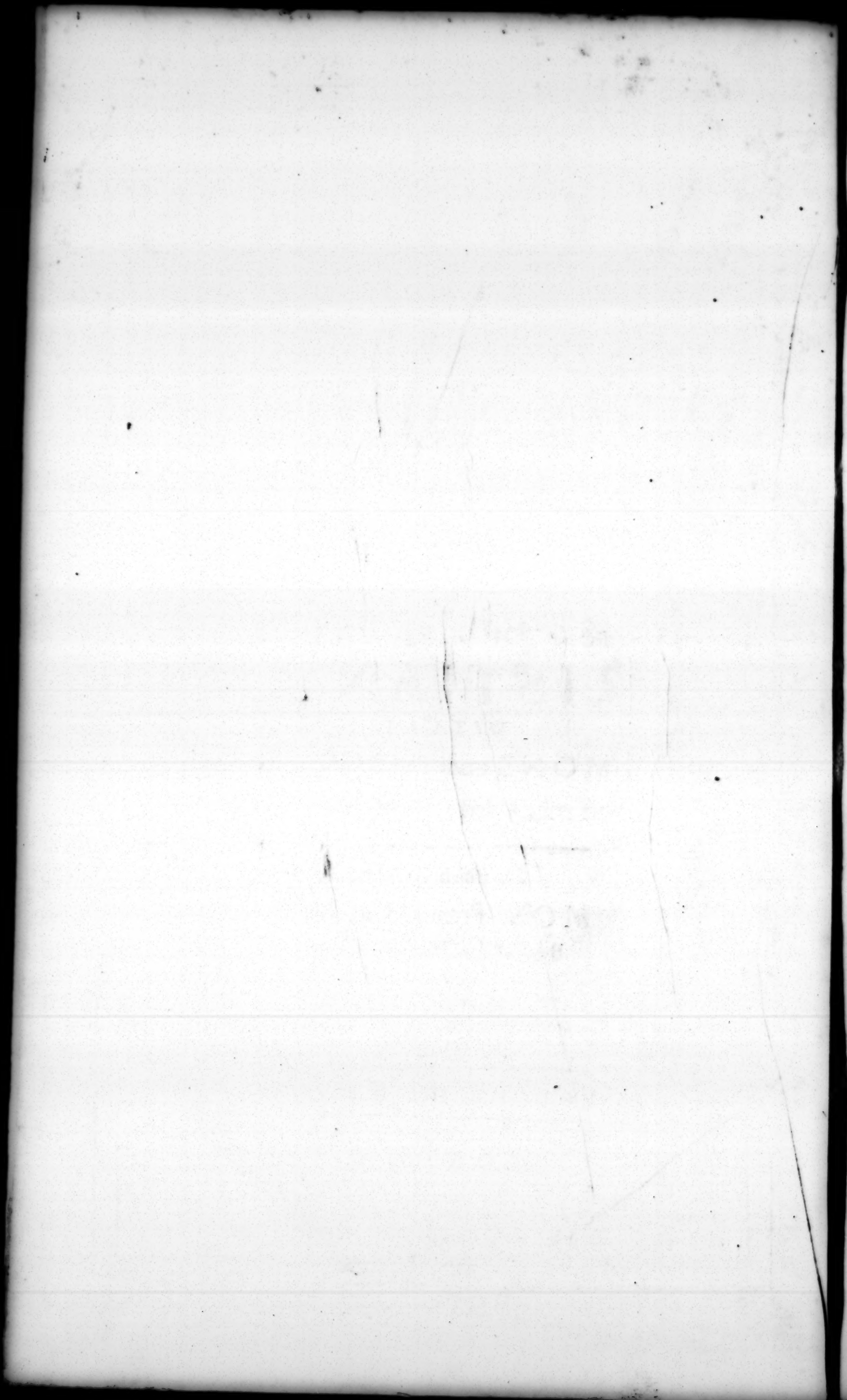
To which is Added,
A SERMON Preach'd at his FUNERAL,
By Z. ISHAM, D.D.

With a Large INDEX
Of Texts of Scripture purposely inferted on, or occasionally explain'd: And an
Alphabetical TABLE of the Principal Matters contain'd in the Whole.

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THE
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 OF EACH
SERMON and DISCOURSE
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SERMON I.

Preach'd before

The Honourable Military Company at
St. Clements Danes, July 25. 1673.

EPHES. 6. II.

Put on therefore the whole Armour of God.

THAT which giveth us the Advantage of Brutes, and ranketh us in a Form of Beings above them, is the Rational and Immortal Spirits we carry about with us: As for our Bodies, they are but Clods of Earth steeped in Phlegm, and kneaded into Human Shapes, and do derive their Pedigree from the same Principles with Flies and Scare Bees, and the most contemptible Animals: But our Souls are of a pure Alloy, and by their Nature are allied to Angels, and do border upon God himself; and it is by the Title of these Rational Natures that we are now superiour to Beasts, and hope hereafter to be equal with Angels: And yet, besotted Creatures that we are, how do we prefer our Bodies before our Souls, imploying all our Cares in providing for, and pampering of our Flesh, as if our Reason were given us for no other End, but to be Cook and Taylor to our Bodies, to study Sauces and Fashions for them; whilst our immortal Spirits pine and famish, and like forlorn things, are wholly abandoned by us to Wretchedness and Misery. That it is so, is apparent by too many woful Instances: The poor Labourer that sweateth, and toileth all Day for his Body, thinketh much at Night to bestow upon his Soul a Prayer of a Quarter of an Hour long; the Tradesman, that thinks no Industry too much to make a fair and ample Provision for his Body, grudgeth to expend a few good Thoughts and Endeavours in the Purchase of an Eternal Inheritance for his Soul; the Soldier, that shuts up his Body in Ribs of Iron and Coats of Mail to secure it from the Sword and Bullets of his Enemies, exposeth his Soul unarmed to all the Fiery Darts of the Devil: And though his Understanding hath as much need of Knowledge, as his Head hath of an Helmet; his Will as much need of Justice, as his Breast of a Buckler; his Affections as much need of Fortitude and Temperance, as his Legs and Hands have of Greaves and Gantlets; yet he ventures them all naked amongst a thousand Enemies; as if his little Toe or Finger were more dear and precious to him, than his immortal Soul. But if we would be good Soldiers and good Men too, we must arm ourselves within as well as without; and as we harness our Bodies in Iron, so must we put on upon our Souls the whole Armour of God; and this is the Counsel of the Apostle in the Text, which I have chosen for the Subject of my ensuing Discourse: *Put on therefore the whole Armour of God.* By the whole Armour of God, here we are to understand the Christian Religion; that is, the Doctrine and Duties of Christianity; as you may see at large, from the four-

teenth to the eighteenth Verse of this Chapter, where the Apostle instances in the particular Parts of which this whole Armour consisteth; the first is the Girdle of Truth, that is, the Doctrine of the Gospel, in opposition to all Heathen Errors, and Heretical Insinuations; the second is, the Breast-plate of Righteousness, that is, sincere and faithful Obedience unto Christ; the third is, the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace, that is, the Practice of Christian Charity and Peaceableness; the fourth is, the Shield of Faith, that is, the Belief of the Promises and Threats of the Gospel; the fifth is, the Helmet, that is, the Hope of Salvation; the sixth is, the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; and the last is, Prayer and Watchfulness. These are the several Parts of this Divine Armour: In which you see, are reckoned both the Doctrines and Duties of Christianity: By the putting on of these therefore, nothing else can be meant, but only our hearty Belief of the Doctrines, and our sincere Practice of the Duties of Christian Religion: For to this Sense the Phrase is frequently used in the New Testament. Thus, when the Apostle exhorteth us *to put on the Lord Jesus Christ*, in *Rom. 13. 14.* it is plain, he meaneth nothing else but believing in Christ, and obeying him. And so also when in *Ephes. 4. 22, 24.* he exhorteth them to put off the Old Man, and put on the New, he meaneth nothing else, but that they should forsake their Heathen Superstitions, and Idolatrous Uncleanesses, and conform all their Actions to the new Rule of Christian Purity.

In the Words thus explained, you have, First, something implied; which is, that the Christian Religion is Armour of Defence unto the Souls of Men.

Secondly, something expressed, that if we mean it should arm and defend us, we must believe and practise it.

First, That the Christian Religion is Armour of Defence unto the Souls of Men; that is, it is of the same Use to Mens Souls, as Armour is to their Bodies: For as the End of Armour is to defend Mens Bodies, and secure them against the Weapons of their Enemies; so the great End and Design of the Christian Religion is to defend Mens Souls from whatsoever is hurtful and injurious to them. Now there are but two sorts of Evils in the World, both which are injurious to the Souls of Men. The first is the Evil of Sin; and the second is the Evil of Misery; and against both these Christianity doth strongly arm us.

First, for the Evil of Sin, which upon several Accounts is injurious to Mens Souls: It overthroweth the Order and Oeconomy of their Natures, enslaving their Reasons to their Passions and Appetites; as it discomposeth the Tranquillity of their Minds, by inspiring them with wild and inconsistent Passions; and it disturbeth the Peace of their Consciences, by suggesting black Thoughts, and horrible Reflections to them: These, and several other ways, is Vice injurious to our Souls. And therefore 'tis the Design of Christianity to arm us against this great Evil, to secure and defend us against all the Weapons of Unrighteousness. Hence the Apostle telleth us, that *the Grace of God*, that is, the Gospel, *was revealed from Heaven*, for this very End, *to teach us to deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lust, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present World*, *Tit. 2. 11.* And *St. John* telleth us, that *for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil*, *1 John 3. 8.* This was the Errand of the Son of God into the World, and the Design of that incomparable Religion he taught, *to destroy the Works of the Devil*: And indeed if we consider what an effectual Course Christianity taketh to defend us against Sin, we must confess it to be the most excellent Armour in the World: For,

1. First, It restraineth us from it by the purest Laws. The Laws of Christian Religion have made so great a Gulph between our Sins, and separated us from them by such an infinite Distance, that it is impossible for them to come at us, or for us to go to them, whilst we persevere in our Obedience to them: For they do not only forbid us that which is really evil; but do also command us to abstain from all Appearances of Evil, and do remove us so far out of the Territories of Sin, that they will not permit us to approach the Borders of it: And lest we might unhappily go farther than we should, they forbid us to go as far as we may,

may, and will not allow us so much as to come within the Skirts and Suburbs of Iniquity. For in moral Actions the Distance is frequently so small between the utmost of what is lawful, and the nearest of what is sinful, that there are very few Men in the World can set a Rule to themselves, Hitherto may I go, and no farther; and therefore without any infallible Guide to point out to them the just and particular Limits of lawful and unlawful, Men can hardly be secure, whilst they dwell upon the Frontiers and Neighbourhood of Sin; and therefore the Gospel commands us, at least to endeavour to keep at distance from sinning, and not come near the Pitch, lest we be defiled by it: Neither doth it only restrain us from outward Acts, but also from inward Inclinations to Evil: We must be so far from murdering our Brother, that we must not hate, or wish ill to him; so far from practising Rapine and Oppression, that we must not so much as covet our Neighbour's Possessions; so far from acting Adultery, that we must not look upon a Woman to lust after her: Thus the Laws of our Religion, you see, do strike at the very Root of Sin, and choak the very Springs from whence those bitter Streams derive; and do not, like other Laws, merely restrain our outward Practice; but also lay Reins upon our Desires, and extend their Empire to free born Thoughts. In this respect therefore Christianity doth most effectually arm us against Sin, as it restraineth us from it by the purest Laws that ever were.

Secondly, by dissuading us from it with the most prevailing Arguments. There is no Article of the Christian Faith, but is a copious Topick of Motives to Virtue: And if Men would but take the pains to extract from each their proper and just Inferences; and to ponder those great Obligations to Gratitude and Duty, which the several Articles of their Religion do devolve upon them, Christianity must necessarily do Wonders in the World, and work strange Alterations in the Lives and Manners of Christians: For there is no Stone that it leaveth unturned, nothing within us that is capable of Persuasion, but it addresseth to; to win upon our Hope, it proposeth to us a Happiness so extensive, that we can neither desire, nor imagine beyond it; a Happiness that is equal to the utmost Capacities of our Natures, and parallel to the longest Duration of our Beings; that hath not the least Tang of Misery in it, no bitter Farewel nor appendant Sting to it; but is all Quintessence composed of the purest Extracts of Joy and Pleasure. What greater Motive can be urged to dissuade us from sinning, than the Hope of such a Happiness as doth so infinitely out-bid all that Vice can proffer us, and is weighty enough to preponderate all its Temptations, though all the World were in the Counterbalance? But if we are so wedded to our Lusts, that no Hope of Advantage will dis-engage us from them; Christianity thunders against them all the dreadful Threats that are capable of scaring us into sober Purposes: It denounceth unquenchable Fire, and eternal Vengeance against all Unrighteousness and Ungodliness of Men; and alarms our Fears with all the inconceivable Horrors that an everlasting Hell menaceth: And that this may not scare us only from open Prophaneness into close and secret Hypocrisie, it assureth us, that there will be a Day of fearful Account, and wherein all that we acted behind the Curtain, shall be brought into publick View upon an open Theater, and proclaimed to all the World by the Trumpet of God, and the Voice of an Arch-Angel: And that we may be assured that these Terrors of the Lord are not mere Bugs, and Scare-Crows, it giveth us a fearful Example of God's Severity against Sin, in the Death and Sufferings of his own Son; wherein he hath proclaimed himself an implacable Enemy to Vice, in that he would not pardon it without the Blood of the most beloved Darling of his Soul: And certainly he, that after this Assurance of God's Severity against Sin, can dare to be wicked, is a most valiant and courageous Sinner: And if after he hath confronted the Tribunal of God, and out-faced the Flames of Hell, he can laugh at this fearful Example of Divine Severity, he is fit for a Reserve, or a Forlorn Hope, and may boldly venture to be wicked through all the Terrors in the World: But if Men should be so senselessly wicked, as not to be persuaded ei-

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ther by Hope or Fear, yet perhaps Ingenuity may prevail; which that it may, Christianity presseth us with the most endearing Motives in the World; it sets before us the Infinite Obligations which God hath laid upon us, in bestowing upon us our Beings, in surrounding us with his careful Providence; but above all, in giving his Son to die for us; and to infer this last, it representeth our most kind and merciful Redeemer groaning under the Cruelty of our Sins; it bringeth forth his bloody Garments, as *Anthony* did those of the murder'd *Cæsar*, and spreadeth them before our Eyes, and in the most passionate manner accuseth our Sins for being his Assassines and Murderers; and can we find in our Hearts to hug his Executioners, to harbour the Traitors that slew our Friend, our Friend that loved us a thousand times better than we love our selves? Surely if we should, we should deserve to be branded for the most disingenuous and most ill natur'd Persons in the World: For 'tis impossible that any Kindness should oblige us, if we find in our Hearts to be wicked, in spite of all the Love of God, and all the Wounds and Blood of our Redeemer. Thus you see with what powerful Arguments Christianity doth arm us against Sin.

Thirdly, It armeth us against it with the most powerful Grace and Assistance. Christianity is animated with a Divine Spirit, that hath all along enlivened and actuated it, and rendred it in all Ages so successful and victorious: 'Twas by virtue of this Divine Spirit, that it triumphed in its very Infancy, over all the Power and Malice of the World, that like the Palm-Tree, it grew by Depression, and conquered in the midst of Flames; insomuch that within less than an hundred Years after the Death of Christ, it had made successful Inroads into the remotest Kingdoms, and captivated a great Part of Mankind into the Belief and Obedience of it; and though it found the Minds of Men prepossessed with a contrary Religion, and consequently had mighty Prejudices to combat, before it could come to lay siege to their Reason; yet it charged like a Thunderbolt, thro' all these Obstacles; and with its Spiritual Artillery battered down all Opposition before it, and wrought such strange Alterations in the World, that the World scarce knew her self, and stood admiring at her own Change: She saw the thronged Temples of the Heathens unfrequented, the adored Gods derided, the celebrated Oracles ceased, the wise Philosophers puzzled, the enraged Magistrates disheartened, by the Unsuccessfulness of their own Cruelties, and all this done by a few despicable and illiterate Fishermen; and yet all this had not been so strange, had it won Men only to an Opinion or a Faction: For such Chaff will soonest catch small Birds, a giddy and a hair-brain'd Multitude: But the Wonder of it was, that Christianity converted Men from Folly and Vice, to a sublime Pitch of Virtue and substantial Goodness; and of vicious, debauched and dissolute, made them sober, and temperate and righteous; which is so clear an Evidence of that extraordinary Power and Efficacy that accompanied it, that the Heathens attributed its Successes to the Power of Magick, as *St. Austin* hath observed, concluding that 'twas impossible for it to conquer through so many Difficulties without the Assistance of some mighty and powerful Spirit: And though it doth not now convert Men so miraculously as it did at first, but proceedeth in more rational and human Methods, by joyning in with our Understandings, and leading us forward by Reason and Sobriety, by instructing our Faculties in the right Perception of Things, and by discovering a fuller Evidence, and stronger Connection of Truths: So that whatsoever Assistance it now affordeth us, it worketh in the same way, and after the same manner, as if they were all performed by the Strength of our own Reason; yet still there are mighty Assistances accompanying all its Ministrations, and it is enlivened with a Divine Power and Efficacy: For still those Promises are in Force, *To him that bath, shall be given; and He will give his Spirit to every one that asketh*: So that God's Grace is wanting to none, but to those that are wanting to themselves: For if we will be so ingenuous as to do what we can, God will be so gracious as to help us to do what we cannot. If therefore we do not do all, it is our own Fault, since we may do all through Christ, who will strengthen us, if we do what we can. What therefore may we not do, who are thus
armed

armed with Divine Assistance? What Sins are there so strong, that we may not mortifie? What Passions so violent, that we may not tame? What Habits so inveterate, that we may not vanquish, who are thus backed and aided with Auxiliaries from above? And thus you see what impenetrable Armour the Christian Religion is against all the Darts and Weapons of Sin, and how able it is to render us Shot-proof, and invulnerable against all its Temptations.

I come now to the second thing proposed, which is to shew you that Christianity is Armour of Proof against the Evil of Misery, that is, against all those Cares and Fears, those Grievs and Sorrows, Vexations and Anxieties, wherewith we are here encompass'd on every side: And indeed there is nothing in the World can give so much Ease unto the Minds of Men, and fortifie them so impregably against the Miseries of the World, as true Religion. Hence is that of our Saviour, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you*, Matth. 11. 28. That is, all you that are tired out with the Crosses and Troubles of this miserable World, do but become my Disciples, believe my Doctrine, and obey my Commands, and I will give Ease and Refreshment to your Minds. And in the following Verse he telleth us, that by taking his Yoke, that is, his Religion upon us, we shall find Rest for our Souls: And of necessity, his Yoke must mightily contribute to the arming of Souls against the Troubles of the World upon these following Accounts:

1. First, In that it naturally inspireth us with true Courage and Magnanimity. There is nothing in the World so valiant and heroick, as a true Christian Spirit: For its Courage is compos'd of the best Metal in the World, of Patience and Temperance, of Constancy and Resignation to the Will of God; all which mingled together, do beget in the Soul an invincible Firmness and Staidness of Mind against all dangerous and dolorous Accidents whatsoever: For what Accident can daunt a Soul that is weaned by Temperance from the Pleasures of the Body, and hardned by Patience against the Pain and Displeasures of it; that hath so subdued her Passions, as to be always present to her self, and constant to her own Reason; and having resigned up all to the Conduct of Divine Providence, receiveth every Accident as a Token of Love, and giveth a hearty Welcome to whatsoever befalleth her? Such a Soul as this standeth firm as a Rock, out-braving all the Storms of Fortune, making its envious Waves retire in empty Foam, and insignificant Passion: But wheresoever these brave Qualities are wanting, it is impossible a Man should be truly courageous: For Intemperance, Impatience, and Diffidence will let in every Trouble that assaults us, to spoil and ravage us at Pleasure, and expose all the Peace and Tranquillity of our Minds to the Mercy of every Trifle; so that we shall not be able to abide the Shock of any cross Accident that encountreth us; but, like cowardly Poultrons, shall lie down vanquished at the Feet of every Trouble that befalleth us: And there is no greater Sign of Cowardice and Weakness of Spirit, than an Aptness to be discomposed with Trifles: For as sick Persons are offended at the Light of the Sun, and the Freshness of the Air, which administer Pleasure and Recreation to those that are in Health; even so Persons of weak and pusillanimous Spirits are easily offended; their Minds are so tender and effeminate, that they cannot bear the least Air of Trouble without Disturbance; and what would be a Diversion to a courageous Soul, grieveth and incommodeth them. But when we are once arrived to a due Pitch of Patience, Temperance and Confidence in God, all the Troubles of the World will be but like Flea-bites to a sleeping Lion; and we shall no more be concerned with these little Crosses and Mischances, than the Moon is with the Yelping of those whiffling Curs that bark at her from below. For true Christian Courage is the most heroick of all other: For Courage is merely brutal, consisting in Heats and Ferments of the Blood and Spirits, in which Game-Cocks and Mastives out-vye the greatest Heroes in the World. But the Courage of a Christian is truly Rational and Manly, founded in Religion and true Principles of Reason, and so is a thousand times more manageable and useful, than that which ariseth only out of Temper and Complexion: For this sort of Courage is headstrong

strong and unruly, and like an hot metall'd Horse, doth oftentimes run away with the Rider, and instead of securing us from, carries us headlong into Mischief : But true Christian Courage is gentle and obsequious to the Commands of Reason, and upon that account is far more useful in our Extremities, and is more applicable to our Necessities. Since therefore Christianity inspireth us with such an Excellent Courage as this, it cannot but render us invincible, and effectually shield us against all the Blows of Fortune.

Secondly, It armeth us against the Miseries of the World, by reconciling us unto God. 'Tis impossible a Man should be free from Trouble and Anxiety of Mind, whilst he is in a State of Enmity with God : For there is grafted within our very Natures such a natural Awe and Dread of a Divine Power, as doth necessarily alarm all that Fear and Horror that is within us, whensoever we knowingly provoke that Power we so much dread and tremble at ; and our Consciences being thus in a Tumult and Uproar, will give a Sting to all our Miseries, and render all our Dangers more terrible and amazing ; 'twill represent every cross Accident to us as a Messenger of God's Vengeance, and every little Danger as an approaching Storm from Heaven : And then how must every Danger affright, and every Misery oppress us, that comes with a Commission from that Almighty Vengeance which we so naturally dread and tremble at ? How can we but sink, even under our Crosses, when we think what a Load of Wrath there is in them ? How can we but quake at our Dangers, when we look upon them as so many Thunderbolts, which Omnipotent Fury is hurling at our Head ? The Thought of this will imbitter all our Miseries, and make the most trifling Dangers to look stern and terrible. Hence is that of the Wise Man, *The Wicked flee when no Man pursueth ; but the Righteous are bold as a Lion.* For though no Man pursueth them, yet their own Consciences, like restless Furies, haunt them whither ever they go ; and this makes them flee before a Shadow, and when none pursueth them, they run away from themselves. Thus whilst we are in Hostility against God, we lie open to all Weathers, and our own Consciences do betray us to the Fury of all those Troubles and Dangers that surround us. But the great End of Christian Religion is to reconcile us unto God : In order to which, it both proposeth a Peace to us, and the Terms and Articles upon which it is to be obtained ; which Terms when we have performed, the Quarrel presently endeth in a mutual Confederacy ; and of Enemies, we become the Friends and Favourites of God : Upon which there followeth a Jubilee of Joy and Peace within ; the Conscience smieth and groweth calm as the Ocean when the Wind is laid : And now, if Troubles befall us, if Dangers encounter us, 'tis all but like the Ratling of Hail upon the Tiles of a Musick-House, which with all their Clattering and Noise, will not be able to disturb the Harmony within. For a quiet Conscience will be a Paradise in a Wilderness, a Haven in the midst of Storms ; it will make a Man fearless in Danger, joyful in Tribulation, and enable him to sing with a Thorn at his Breast ; and when Troubles and Crosses surround him on every side, that will be a Sanctuary to him whereunto he may retire, and be merry in spite of Fortune : Thus, by Reconciling us unto God, the Christian Religion armeth us against all the Miseries in the World.

Thirdly, It doth it also by assuring us of that special Care and Regard which the Divine Providence hath of us and our Affairs : Christianity assureth us, *That all things shall work together for the Good of them that love God, and keep his Commandments :* That even their Afflictions shall prosper them, and all the cross-Winds conspire to blow them to the Right Port : And what greater Security can a Man desire, than to have all his Affairs managed by a Providence that is infinitely wise, and knoweth what is best for us ; infinitely kind, and willeth what he knoweth best ; and infinitely powerful, and doth what it willeth ? This is the utmost that any Modest or Reasonable Man can desire for his Security ; and he that firmly believeth this, must necessarily be happy, whatsoever befall him : For whatsoever happeneth, he taketh as a Favour, because it cometh from the Hand of that wise and merciful Providence, which he is well assured,

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doth both know and do that which is best for him : And is it not a thousand times better, that our Affairs should be manag'd as God thinketh fit, who is so much wiser than we, and loveth us far better than we do our selves ; than that they should always jump with our childish Hopes, and keep pace with our extravagant Fancies ? And if the Government of all Events that befall us, were put into our own Hands, would it not be our Wisdom and our Interest to resign it back into God's Hands again ; who, as we must needs acknowledge, can carve a thousand times better for us, than we for our selves ? Why then should we be troubled that our Affairs sometimes run counter to our Humours and Fancies ? Did we understand the Reason of God's Dealings, and see what he seeth, and know what he knoweth, we should praise him on our bended Knees, for those Crosses which are now the innocent Causes of our Repinings against him. This therefore in reason ought to satisfy us that we are under the Protection of a most Wise and Gracious Providence ; and that if Afflictions do befall us, they are but Rods in the Hands of our Benefactor, and Tokens of Love from a Reconciled Father. For what Reason can we have either to fear or complain, when we know our selves sheltered within the Bosom of that Providence, in which all the Divine Attributes, like so many Guardian Angels, do pitch their Tents about us. Within this blessed Ark, if we please, we may live securely, whilst all the Floods of Misery do swell, and rove about us : Here we may sing *Requiem*s in the loudest Thunders, and sleep securely in the midst of Storms : For what should we be afraid of, when we have Omniscience for our Pilot, Omnipotence for our Convoy, and All sufficient Goodness for our Purveyor and Caterer ? By the Help of this one Consideration a Man may bid Defiance to Misery, and stand impregnable against all the Batteries of the World.

Fourthly, and Lastly, Christianity armeth us against the Evil of Misery, by assuring us of a blessed Immortality : And verily, were it not for the Hope of this, Man were, of all Creatures, the most miserable. For his very Reason, by which he is capable of a larger Happiness, doth most commonly in this Life, prove an Instrument of Grief and Vexation to him. And as for the Beasts, they are as sensible of Sensual Pleasures, as we ; they relish their Morsels with as great a Gust, and enjoy their Delights with as quick a Sense, as the greatest Epicures in the World. Besides which, their Harmony is not mingled with the sad Discords of a wounded Conscience, which often interrupts our Mirth, and puts a Sting to all our Pleasures : And as for Troubles, the Beasts only feel them whilst they are present ; and are not alarm'd with Fear at the Approach of them, nor vexed with Despair in the Presence of them, nor wrack'd with fruitless Cares of removing them ; to all which Inconveniencies our Reason exposeth us. So that were it not for the Hope of a future Happiness, Man, that is the Top of this lower Creation, would be the most miserable Part of it ; and we should have reason to envy the Happiness of the pretty Birds, that sit merrily singing on the Trees ; and to wish that we could change Conditions with the Fishes, that sport and play in the Silver Streams, devoid of all those Griets and Sorrows, Cares and Anxieties with which we are wrack'd and tortur'd every Moment. The only thing therefore that maketh our Life desirable, and giveth it the Advantage of Non-Entity, is this, that how mean soever our Condition is here, yet we are born to higher Hopes, and are now but Candidates for an immortal Preferment : And of this, the Christian Religion giveth us the most certain Assurance, even by the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead. By this it is, that we are begotten into a lively Hope of an Eternal Inheritance, as the Apostle tells us, 1 *Peter* i. 3. And indeed this is a Proof of the immortal State, beyond all other Arguments, whether Moral or Physical : For had not this Doctrine of Immortality been true, it cannot be imagined that the God of Truth would have sealed and confirmed it, as he did, by raising the Author of it from the Dead ; since in so doing, he must have been guilty of cheating the World, and seconding the most rank Imposture ; than which we cannot form a Conceit more black, or incongruous to the Nature of God. Wherefore now Life
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and Immortality are as clear and evident, as the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead ; of which we have as full Assurance as we can possibly have of any matter of Fact in the World : For the Eye-witnesses of it confirmed their Testimony with their Blood, which is the highest Pledge that a Man can give of his Honesty ; and there is no Credit to be given to Men, if they may not be believed upon this Security. Thus Christianity, you see, hath founded our Hopes of Immortal Happiness upon the surest Foundations in the World ; which Hope is sufficient to raise any considering Man above the Reach of Misery. For would we but keep our Thoughts within those higher and untroubled Regions, we should be able to look down upon these little Affairs, about which poor Mortals scramble, with as much Contempt and Scorn, as we do upon the Toils and Labours of a little World of Ants about a Mole-hill, who are not altogether so ridiculous, because they do not divide their Mole hill into Little Empires, nor defraud and murder, nor be false and treacherous to one another for the greater Share ; nor were they ever so extraxagant as to march out in Armies to kill their neighbouring Ants, so to extend their Dominion over the next Handful of a Turf : But he, whose Hope hath mounted him to Heaven, can from thence look down and sigh, and smile at all these Fooleries, and slight and undervalue whatsoever sensual Men, poor Souls, do fear, or hope, or long for, or pursue : For he hath such a Glory within the Prospect of his Faith and Hope, as doth at one Glimpse foil all the Glory of the World, and unting all its Miseries. The Sight of that flowery *Canaan* of Rest and Pleasure that lieth before him, encourageth him to march on with Joy and Alacrity through this howling Desert of Sorrow and Misery, and maketh the Wilderness to seem a Paradise to him ; and at worst, all the ill Usage that he meets with here, will but make Earth more loathsome now, and Heaven more welcome to him hereafter. When therefore he is tossed in this Tempestuous Sea, he considereth with himself, that a few Leagues farther lieth that blessed Port, where he shall be crowned as soon as he is landed ; and concludes, that when he is gotten safe on Shore, he shall then look back with Pleasure and Delight upon those Threatening Waves he now encountreth, and for ever bless the Storms and Winds that drave him thither, and so resolveth with *St. Paul*, *That the Sufferings of this present Life are not worthy to be compared with the Joys that shall be revealed*, Rom. 8. 18. And thus you see, what incomparable Armour the Christian Religion is, both against Sin and Misery. But yet we must not think it will defend us, if we only keep it by us to look on : There never was any Soldier so foolish, as to think himself secure in a Battle, because he hath excellent Armour at home, locked up in his Chest or Closet ; and yet so besotted are many Men, as to expect Defence and Security from their Religion, because they are baptized Christians, and have a Scheme of Christianity in their Bibles : As if Religion were nothing but a Charm or Amulet, which being hung about their Necks, must immediately dis-inchant them of all their Maladies. But be not mistaken ; if ever you mean this Armour of God should do you good, you must put it on, you must transcribe its Doctrines into your Belief, and its Duties into your Practice ; which is the second Thing I proposed to discourse of, that if we would have Christianity Armour of Defence unto us, we must put it on, that is, we must believe and obey it : For unless we believe the Doctrines of Christianity, how can they defend us either from Sin or Misery ? For our Holy Religion doth not work magically upon Men, nor make them invulnerable, as the Witch did *Achilles*, merely by Charms and Inchantments ; but it proceeds by Rational and Accountable Methods, and fortifieth our Minds by Reason and Arguments ; but no Proposals of Reason can work upon the Minds of Men that do not believe them : And though the things proposed be never so true in themselves, yet unless we assent to the Truth of them, we shall be no more concerned in them, than if they were the grossest Fictions. For no Man will be moved by those things in which he thinketh he hath no Interest : But in pure Falshoods we can have none ; because they are pure Non-Entities. To what purpose therefore is it that Christianity hath armed us against Sin with the strongest Motives

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in the World, if we do not believe them? All the Glories it proposeth will signifie no more to us, than the Promise of a fair Inheritance in *Utopia*; and we shall be no more concern'd in all the Terrors it denounceth, than if we were only threatned with an Invasion from the World in the Moon: And what though Christianity fortifies us against Misery, with Arguments strong enough to create Comfort in Hell; yet if we give no credit to them, they will be as far from comforting us, as the Festival Dreams of a starving Man, are from satisfying his Hunger. If therefore we intend that Religion should secure us, either from Sin or Misery, we must embrace its Proposals with a hearty and lively Faith; and as we must believe it, so we must practise it; else it will be as insignificant to us as the Dreams of the *Alcoran*: For the way of Christian Religion is, not to hall and drag Men out of the Arms of their Lusts by Force and irresistible Power; but by Arguments to solicit them to the Practice of those Duties it enjoyneth, and by that to wean them from their vicious Inclination. For our Religion walks in the Methods of our Nature, and carries us on by degrees from Acts to Habits of Goodness. And in this Method it is, that the Divine Grace, which accompanies Christianity, doth work its Effects upon the Spirits of Men, not by the instantaneous Infusion of virtuous Habits into their Wills; but by making effectual Addresses to their Reason and Consciences, to persuade them to thwart their vicious Inclinations, by practising those Virtues that are contrary to them: And so it goeth on, moving us to a continued Repetition of those virtuous Acts, until all our evil Habits are gone out, and expired into the contrary Habits of Virtue and Goodness. For the Grace of God is like a Graft put into a Stock of another Nature; it makes use of the Faculties and Juice of the Stock, but by degrees converts all into its own Nature: And therefore we usually see, that when a Man hath been wicked, the Beginnings of his Reformation proceed not from Habit and Inclination, but from Fear and Terror; and whilst he doth obey God, he would rebel if he dared; but persevering in his Obedience, he groweth more habituated to it, and so by degrees it becomes his Nature. This therefore being the ordinary Method of Christianity, to carry us on by repeated Acts, to permanent Habits of Virtue, our Obedience to its Commands is indispensably necessary, if we expect it should either rescue or secure us from Sin: For no Man is secure from Sin, until he is habitually virtuous; which State, without a Miracle, no Man can arrive to, but through intermediate Acts of Obedience: And as without the Practice of its Duties, Christianity cannot arm us against Sin, so neither can it against Misery. For all those gracious Promises, and comfortable Proposals by which our Religion arms us against the Misery of this World, are suspended upon the condition of our Obedience to its Laws; and whilst this is wanting, there is not one Word of Comfort for us in all the glad Tidings of the Gospel; there is no Promise in it will open a Door of Hope to shelter us from the Storms of Trouble; but all its dreadful Threats will be perpetually thundering out their Terrors upon us: So that if we are resolved to be wicked, we can never expect Comfort from Christianity: For it hath set up a flaming Sword to chase all Wickedness out of the Paradise of its Joys. So that we may as soon suck Balsam out of a Scorpion's Sting, or gather Nectar from a Nest of Wasps, as Joy or Comfort from the Christian Religion, whilst we persevere in our Wickedness. Thus you see how necessary it is, that we should believe the Doctrines, and practise the Duties of Christianity, if ever we mean that it should arm and defend us. To close up all therefore, as you hope to be the better for your Religion, to be defended by it, either from Sin or Misery; do not content your selves any longer, either with the empty Name of Christians, or the formal Profession of Christianity; but endeavour seriously to work your Minds into such an effectual Belief of it, as may thoroughly mould you into an hearty Compliance with its Duties. For which end let me persuade you to shake off all that Prejudice against Religion, which lewd and vicious Principles may have infused into your Understandings; and to consider seriously with your selves, whether it be not a thousand times more for your Interest, that Religion

should be no Imposture, than that you should enjoy your Lusts ; and whether all those Comforts that Religion administers in this Life, and all those Hopes it giveth of a glorious Immortality in the Life to come, be not infinitely more valuable, than the short and fulsome Pleasure of a few paltry Vices : And sure, if you are wise, when you have thoroughly consider'd this, you will heartily wish, that Christianity were true, though you should not be able to believe it so. But if when you have quitted all your Prejudice, you will but impartially survey those many and mighty Evidences upon which this excellent Religion is founded, you will soon find all that Infidelity which now hovers over your Understandings, vanish and fly away like Shadows before the Sun ; and your Minds being once persuaded into an hearty Belief of its Truth and Divinity, you cannot imagine what Force you will find in all its Motives and Arguments : Then will its Promises tempt you a thousand times more than all the Lures and Blandishments of Vice ; and its Threats will over-power you with such an awful Dread, that nothing in the World will be so terrible as Sin ; and you will find more Life in one Word of Religion, than in all the Address and Rhetorick of Vice : Then you will no longer complain of the Difficulties of Religion, nor be startled at the steep Ascents in the Way to Heaven : For your Faith will every Moment supply you with new Strength and Vigour to carry you through all the weary Stages of your Duties : And having thus put on Christianity by Faith and Obedience, you will find your selves instantly inspir'd by it with such an invincible Courage, as will enable you to conquer all the Malice, and triumph over all the Miseries of the World. For now we shall be Masters of our own Fortunes, and we need no longer be Tenants at Will to the Chances and Accidents of the World, but have all our Happiness in our own Hands ; and may choose whether we will be miserable : For whilst we keep Peace with God and our own Consciences, and do not through our own wilful Folly, forfeit the blessed Hope of Immortality, it is not all the Power and Malice in the World can threaten our Ruin, or shake the Foundation of our Happiness : And therefore as we would be happy both here and hereafter, let us *put on the whole Armour of God*, and sincerely submit our Faith to the Doctrines, and our Practice to the Laws of Christianity. Then may we bid defiance to all Misery, and march triumphantly through Heaven to Heaven, and pass through one Paradise into another : And our Religion having armed us against all the Troubles of this Life, shall in the End crown us with the Joys of the Life to come.

SERMON II.

Preach'd before

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor
and Court of Aldermen, at *Guild-Hall*
Chapel, *November 5, 1673.*

LUKE 9. 56.

*For the Son of Man came not to destroy Mens Lives,
but to save them.*

IT is the Glory of the Christian Religion, that it hath conquer'd the World, and triumph'd over all that oppos'd it, without any other Weapon but its own victorious Beauty and Reasonableness. Had it been proclaimed by the Mouths of Cannon, or march'd like *Paracelsus* his *Dæmon*, upon the Pommel of his Sword; it had been rivall'd by sundry successful Impostures; and the *Alcoran* it self would have compar'd Victories with it: But in this it hath the Preeminence of all the Religions that ever were, that it achiev'd its Conquest without Scrib or Sword, without the Aid of worldly Force or Policy: That by its own native Light, it vanquish'd the Ignorance and Prejudice of the World; and by pure diht of Reason, subdu'd Mens Minds to its Empire: For 'twas not by Racks and Tortures that it converted Infidels, and convinced Hereticks; but by Reason and Miracles; and till it began to be sophisticated with temporal Interests and Designs, it taught its Followers only to endure, but not to inflict Persecutions: For this was their Language in the purer Ages, *Non est Religionis, cogere Religionem, quæ suscipi debet sponte, non Vi*, as *Tertullian* expresses it; *Religion presseth no Man to her Service, and disdains to have any Followers but Volunteers.* But when once its Followers began to bend it to their Interest, and make it the Solicitor of their Temporal Designs to break into Parties, and imbarque their own Reputation, and in the Success of those disputable Opinions, that distinguish'd them; then according as they had the Luck to succeed in their Disputes, and the Favour of the Emperors, they began to solicit, and arm the Temporal Power against their Adversaries: In which bad Practice they imitated those, whom in all other things they did condemn; namely, the *Arrians*, the *Circumcellians*, and *Donatists*, who were the first Christians that either persuaded, or practis'd Persecution: And yet for a long while so abhorrent it was from the Temper of Christians, that *Ursatus* and *Itorius*, two otherwise Catholick Bishops, for persuading *Maximus* to destroy the *Priscillianists*, were branded by their Brethren with an infamous Character, and sharply reprov'd by the good Bishop of *Trevers*; who plainly tells them, (*Sulp. Sev. Hist. lib. p. 152.*) *Satis, superque sufficere, ut Episcopali sententiâ hæretico Judicati Ecclesiis pellerentur: Novum est, & inauditum nefas; ut causam Ecclesiæ Judex seculi judicaret: It is sufficient that*

*Hereticks be banish'd the Church as Out-laws from the Communion of Christians : But it is a new and unheard of Wickedness, that a Cause of Religion should be judged and punished at a Secular Tribunal; and yet this was above 370 Years after Christ. But as the Church's Fortunes grew worse, and some of her Fathers worst of all; so Persecution and Tyranny prevailed in Christendom, till at last it was baptized into the Name of Zeal, and enthroned among the Graces of Religion : For if we look into the History of the Roman Church, we shall find Persecution first preached from the Infallible Chair; the Popes whereof growing great, and proud, and impatient of Contradiction, began first to murmur against the Toleration of the *Novatians*; which being a great Eye-sore to those haughty Prelates, as soon as they had gotten Power into their Hands, they rooted them out by Force and Violence; but yet they had not so far abandoned all their natural Sense of Mercy and Goodness, as to proceed to Bloodshed, till the Divine Right of Fire and Faggot was invented by St. *Dominick*, that rabid and furious Incendiary, by whose Instigation the *Albigenses* were wasted by a dreadful War, and 180 of them burnt to death, because they would not abjure their Religion: Which horrid Butchery was acted by the Commission of Pope *Innocent the Third*, (*Antonin. Pars 5. Tit. 19. cap. 1.*) who to encourage it, granted a Plenary Pardon and Indulgence to the Executioners: And now, like *Lybian Tygers*, having tasted Blood, they thirst insatiably for more; and instead of Pastors, turn Butchers to the Flock of Christ, by their repeated Cruelties, converting that Church into an infamous Slaughter-House of Christians; and for these 600 Years, Bleeding hath been the only Remedy those spiritual Mountebanks have prescribed to cure the diseased Church; and this hath been cried up as their great *Catholicon*: Witness the infinite Slaughters they have acted and instigated in *Italy, Bohemia, the Upper and Lower Germany*: Witness the *Spanish Inquisition*, where the Holy Fathers confute Hereticks with Racks and Gibbets: Witness the *Parisian Massacre*, where our Religion was confuted only with Skenes and Daggers: Witness the *Marian Days*, wherein the *Roman Faith* was defended so gloriously against all Arguments, with only that Dreadful Text, *Recant or Burn*: And if all this be not enough, witness that Horrid *Powder Plot*, the Prevention of which we now commemorate; a Villainy so foul and monstrous, as was never parallel'd either in Fiction or History; and compar'd with which, the most tragick Scenes of Melancholy Poets, and dismal Phantasms of despairing Souls, are but all Comick Tales, Subjects of Sport and Laughter: A Tragedy so deep and bloody, that certainly had the most barbarous *Cannibal* in *America* been hired to act it, the very Thought of it must have startled him into an Agony; and he could not but have relented, considering thus with himself; I am now giving Fire to a Train, which at one Blow will ruine a whole Kingdom, tear in pieces its King and Princes, and scatter their Members in the Air, strew its Fields with the Limbs and Quarters of its slaughter'd Nobles and Gentry, fill its Streets with the Threns and Lamentations of woful Mothers, the Shrieks and Outcries of desolate Wives and Children, shake its goodly Temples and Royal Palaces into Ruins, and in one Moment lay all its Glory in the Dust: And yet [*O tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the Streets of Ascalon!*] All these Cruelties were designed under the Livery of the most merciful Jesus, and this *Cannibals Feast* of Fellow-Christians Blood prepared to entertain the Father of Mercies, and the Prince of Love; as if they, like the Heathen Demons, fed their hungry Nostrils with the Niderous Reeks and Steams of Human Sacrifices. Thus by degrees you see Persecution is imbodyed into the *Romish Religion*; and when Heresie is the Disease, Ruin is the only Remedy. A sure one indeed; but O how heavenly wide of those mild Prescriptions of the great Physician of Souls! Who being urged by his own Disciples to revenge himself upon a Company of rude and obstinate Schismatics, solemnly professes, that he came not to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them. The Occasion of which Words was an Affront which the *Samaritans* had offered to our Blessed Saviour; who being notorious Enemies to the *Jews* that worshipped at *Jerusalem*, refused to entertain our Saviour for one Night, perceiving he was a *Jew*, and so of a*

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contrary Religion to themselves: Upon which *James* and *John*, mov'd with great Indignation to see their blessed Master so unworthily treated, request him, that after the Example of *Elias*, they might call for Fire from Heaven to destroy them: But he no way approving their Motion, severely rebukes them for it; and plainly tells them, that they knew not what Spirit they were of: As much as if he should have said, If you will needs imitate that Legal Zelotick Spirit *Elias* acted by, whatever you pretend, you act not like my Disciples, whose Spirit and Genius ought to be more tender and merciful; and therefore tho' these *Samaritans* are of a different Sect and Religion, and will not embrace me nor my Doctrine; yet far be it from me to destroy them: For this is quite contrary both to my Temper, and the Design of my coming; which is not to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them. So that you see the plain Scope of the Words is this; That to destroy Mens Lives upon the Score of Religion, is a Practice contrary to the Spirit of Christ, and the Design of his Religion. Before I proceed to the Proof of this Proposition, I shall briefly endeavour to state, and restrain it within its just Bounds and Limits: And they are these Four.

First, That it is not to be understood of any Religion, that is in its own Nature wicked and immoral: For if a Man's Religion teacheth Vice, or directly patronizeth it, his Vice is not the less punishable, because his Religion prompted him to it. Indeed, if he keep his wicked Opinion to himself, it cannot be punished, because it cannot be known: But if he persuades others to it, or practises it himself, it becomes matter of Fact, and is as punishable as the Crime is it persuades to: For the great Rules of Virtue and good Life, are so clear and perspicuous, that a Man cannot be ignorant of them, without being faulty: And therefore if a Man embrace a wicked Opinion, and act or spread it, the matter of Fact is justly punishable according to the Proportion of its Malignity. And indeed if wicked Actions were to be excused upon the Score of Conscience or Opinion, Religion would be made a Sanctuary for all the Villainies in the World: And there is no Crime so monstrous, but would make a shift to shelter it self from Punishment under the Protection of Conscience.

Secondly, And more particularly, that the Proposition is not to be understood of such Opinions, as either directly, or in their immediate Consequents, undermine the Foundations of Government: For Government being indispensably necessary to the well-being of the World, Men ought to know, that that can be no good Religion which teaches Doctrines whose Consequents destroy it; and therefore it's just and reasonable it should be rooted out as a dangerous Pest and Nuisance to the Publick Interest; and the Necessity of the thing will justify the Lawfulness of it: For were Princes bound to tolerate ungovernable Principles, they must be Kings no longer than they can get Leave to reign from the Humour or Conscience of each hot-brain'd Opinionist; and all their Authority must be dependent upon the little *Capricio's* of every peevish Zealot; the Consequents of which must be the Dissolution of Government, and that an Inlet to all Disorder and Confusion. And therefore those, that under a Pretence of Religion, propagate such Principles, are justly accountable for all the consequent Inconveniences, and punishable accordingly.

Thirdly, That the Proposition is not to be understood of our Practice, but of our Judgments and Opinions: For every Man hath a natural Right, as he is a Rational Creature, to judge for himself; and to punish any one for so doing, is the greatest Tyranny in the World; it being an Exercise of Dominion over the Minds of Men, which are subject only to the Empire of God: But as for our Practice, that's liable to the Restraint of Human Laws; and that as well in Sacred, as in Civil Affairs. They cannot indeed oblige us to what God hath forbidden us; because his being the Supreme Authority, ought to take place against all the Countermands of any inferiour Power whatsoever: But then there are a World of Things which remain in a State of Indifferency, and are left undetermined both by the Natural and Positive Laws of God: And these are all liable to the Commands and Determinations of Human Authority, and are the proper Matter

Matter of Civil and Ecclesiastical Laws; to the Extent of whose Jurisdiction, there can be no other Restraint, than only the Countermand of a Superiour Authority: And therefore if there be nothing antecedently evil enjoined by the Laws, whether Civil or Ecclesiastical, we are bound to obey them; and if we do not, we are justly punishable for our Disobedience. Indeed, if we believe the thing enjoined to be evil, though it be not, we ought not to do it, in Obedience to the Supreme Authority of God, which we believe hath forbidden it: But yet if we mistake, and the thing be not evil, but in its own Nature indifferent, we are justly punishable for the not doing it, because our Mistake alters not the Nature of the thing: If it be indifferent, it is a proper Object of Human Laws, whether we think it so or no, and as such may be justly imposed; and the Imposition being just, our not obeying it, must needs be justly punishable. In this Extremity therefore we have no other Redress, but to seek Information, and get our mistaken Consciences better instructed. And if, when we have done all, we cannot alter our Opinion, our meek and patient Submission to the Penalty, will be our Excuse before the Tribunal of God.

Fourthly, and *Lastly*, That the Proposition is not to be understood of our making a publick Profession of our Opinions, so as to disturb the Peace of the Church with them. So long as Men are humble and modest in their Dissent, and do not go about to advance their Opinions into Factions, and to divide and rend the Church in the Propagation of them, I see no Reason why these should be punished and persecuted for them. But if Men openly profess their Dissent to the Prejudice of the publick Peace and Interest, and doat so much upon their own Conceits, as to fancy them necessary for all the rest of Mankind, and consequently go about to vex their Neighbours, provoke their Rulers, and unsettle the Government for the Propagation of them; if through an inconsiderate Zeal for their own Notions, they should be active and industrious to make a Party against the Church, and withdraw others from her Communion, they are Offenders to the publick Peace, and as such are liable to Punishment: For they ought to consider, that unless their Opinion be of greater Moment than the Church's Peace, it ought to vail, and give way to it; and that there are no Opinions weighty enough to balance the Church's Peace, whose Contraries do not undermine Christianity it self, and utterly defeat the Ends of Christian Society. For every Man is oblig'd, by virtue of being in Society, to do his utmost to preserve the Honour and Interest of it, and to joyn in all Acts of it so far as they tend thereunto; and dissent from every thing which tends to the apparent Ruin of that Society. Now the main End of Christian Society, being the Honour of God, and the Salvation of Souls; the primary Reason of Mens entering into Churches, or Christian Societies, is to advance these Ends, and to joyn in all Acts of the Society they are list'd into, so far as they tend to the Advancement of them: But if any thing be requir'd of us directly repugnant to these Ends, we are bound to manifest and declare our Dissent from them, and if for so doing we are cast out of the particular Christian Society; by so doing, and suffering, we preserve our Communion with the Catholick Society of Christians: But if I am never so much persuaded, that such a Practice or Article of the Church is an Error; yet if it be not such an Error as doth defeat the great Ends of Christian Society, I am bound, either to keep my Persuasion to my self, or, at least, not to disturb the Peace of the Church, in my Endeavours to propagate it to others; because, next to the Honour of God, and the Salvation of Souls, the Church's Peace is to be valued above all things whatsoever; and therefore is not to be disturbed for the sake of every little Error and trifling Opinion: It is sufficient that we are allow'd the Liberty of opining, and are not deprived of our Natural Right of judging for our selves; and we ought not to complain, though we should be restrained by Laws and Penalties from making Parties against the Church, and propagating our little Opinions into Factions; since if we will not restrain our selves without such Restriction, it is impossible there should be any Peace among Christian Societies; every hot-brain'd Opinionist will be making a
Party

Party for himself ; and every differing Opinion will grow into a Sect ; and so there will be continual Dividing and Subdividing, till the Christian World be crumbled into as many Churches, as there are Opinions, and as many Opinions as there are Men : For whilst every one is zealously propagating his little Opinion, no Man will let his Brother be quiet : This Man will be ready to burst, till he hath vented himself ; and the other will be as impatient, till he hath contradicted what he hath said : And whilst both are thus zealous to proselyte each other, neither will be content with a single Conquest ; but the Publick must be disturbed, and by the Zeal of the contending Parties, rent into infinite Sects and Divisions. So that you see, it is indispensably necessary, that there should be some Restraint, tho' not upon Mens Opinions, yet upon their publick Profession of them ; since without it the Church will be inevitably exposed to perpetual Tumults and Disturbances.

Having thus stated and bounded the Proposition, you see the plain Meaning of it is this, That it is contrary to the Spirit of Christ, and the Genius of Christianity, to destroy or persecute Men for mere Opinions or Errours in Religion. That it is so, I shall endeavour to prove from these following Instances.

I. It is contrary to that Tenderness and Compassion which Christianity requi-
reth of us : For our Religion enjoins us to sympathize with the miserable, and not to add Afflictions to the Afflicted ; and therefore Fallibility being the natural Imperfection and Unhappiness of Human Understandings, the Errours of them should rather be the Subject of our Pity, than our Revenge : For 'tis as much out of our Power, not to err, as not to be sick, or die : And we may as reasonably punish a Man for not being immortal, as for not being infallible. For the Seeds of Fallibility are sown in the Nature of our Understandings, as well as those of Mortality in the Temper of our Bodies : And we can no more avoid being mistaken in all Instances, than we can prevent the Consumption of our Radical Moisture. All we can do, is, to endeavour not to err ; to stand fast as we can, in the Centre of Truth : But if when we have done so, we should reel on either Hand towards the Circumference of Error, we have done our Duty, and were not bound not to be mistaken. For no Obligation can reach a Man's Conscience, if it be impossible : We cannot be bound to do more than our best, to have the Understanding of an Angel, or to be infallible ; for these are things that are not within the Sphere of our Choice, and therefore are no Matters of Law, or Subjects of Rewards and Punishments. 'Tis true, Error is many times occasioned by a corrupt Byass in the Will ; and Mens Understandings are frequently misled by their Lusts ; and then indeed the Error hath a Guilt derived to it from that evil Principle to which it owes its Original. But if we see Men honest in their Lives, we are bound to think them so in their Errours too : And if their Errours be only innocent Mistakes, what an Inhumanity is it to persecute them for that which is their Misery only, and not their Sin ! Who, but a *Barbarian*, would cut a Man's Throat for being poor, or blind, or lame ? And is it not altogether as barbarous, and cruel, to destroy a Man for that, which is the Poverty, and Blindness, and Lameness of his Understanding ? What is this, but to lay Load upon Load, to trample upon the Prostrate, and heap Miseries upon the Miserable ? Suppose that a different Education, different Books and Company, have cast thy Brother's Understanding into a different Figure from thine ; is it reasonable that therefore thou shouldest persecute and destroy him ? Or rather, is it not as unreasonable, as if thou shouldest cut off his Head, because he hath a Dimple upon his Chin, or a Mole on his Cheeks, or some Line in his Face, that renders him unlike thee ? Suppose he hath ill Luck to believe some Proposition, which to you and me seems wild, absurd and unreasonable ; must we presently beat out his Opinion with his Brains, because the poor Soul was so unfortunate as to be misled by Education, and imposed upon by Authority and Custom, which we see, do so often cheat the honestest Minds ; and, like a mighty Whirlpool, having once sucked a Man in, do keep his Head under Water, and make it almost impossible for him to emerge, or recover himself ? How can
such

such a Piece of Cruelty, do ye think, consist with the Tenderness and Compassion which our Religion enjoyns ?

II. It is destructive of the Union and Harmony among Christians, which the Christian Religion requires : For certainly the Design of Christianity is not to reconcile Mens Notions, or to beget in the World an universal Harmony in Systems of Orthodox Opinions ; which considering the Frame of Humane Nature, the infinite Variety of Mens Ages and Complexions, and the different Sizes of our Understandings, would be, I doubt, as vain a Project, as to attempt to build a Castle in the Air. Nor indeed is it necessary that Men should be all of one Opinion, any more than that all should be of one Humour and Temper : For as in these, Divine Providence hath made a great Diversity, in which there is both Beauty and Convenience ; so perhaps for the same Reason it hath contrived Variety of Opinions, in which if there were an universal Harmony, Mankind would be at a Loss for Subjects of Discourse, and so be deprived of a great Part of the Pleasures of Conversation. The Union therefore which our Religion doth so studiously design, and zealously promote, is that of Hearts and Affections ; and this, I doubt not, might well enough consist with different Opinions, were they but managed with that Humility, Modesty and Charity which becomes Christians. Were we but so modest, as to propose our Opinions calmly, or to keep them to our selves ; so humble, as not to over-value our own Notions, and fancy them necessary for all the rest of Mankind ; so charitable, as to allow our Brethren a Liberty of opining, and not to damn and persecute them, because their Brains are of a different Figure from ours ; I cannot imagine, why different Opinions should more disturb the Church, than Difference in Faces : For such a Demeanour one towards another would infallibly keep our Charity alive ; which, when all is done, is the strongest Ligament of Christian Society, and the surest Band of the Communion of Saints : For this will twine and clasp our Souls together, and tye us one to another by the Heart-strings : But the destroying Mens Lives upon the score of their Opinions, is the most effectual Way in the World to supplant Charity. For how is it possible, considering the Passions of Human Nature, that the persecuted Party should love their Persecutors, whom they see armed with Fire and Faggot to destroy them ? And when once they hate them, (as they will soon do when they cease to love them) their Passion will immediately provoke their Reason to damn and censure them ; which is the only Means that persecuted People have to stay the Stomach of their hungry Vengeance, till they have Power and Opportunity to glut it in the Blood of their Persecutors. And if in the Revolution of things, the Persecuted should get above their Persecutors, what can be expected, but that to preserve themselves, they will destroy them from whom they can expect nothing but Destruction, should another Revolution mount them uppermost again ; and so *Christendom* will be made a Cock-pit of Cruelties ; and as often as Mens Understandings are deceived and abused, so often there will be new Executions and Massacres ; which must therefore needs be the more cruel and unmerciful, because they are so consecrated with a Pretence of Religion. For when Religion, which should be the Antidote of our Cruelty, proves its greatest Incentive, it must needs run on the faster into Mischief, by how much that which stopp'd its Course before, drives it on with the greater Violence : So that by persecuting Men upon the score of Opinion, we do what in us lies, to banish Charity out of the World ; and in the room of that Love and Union, which our Religion enjoyns, to introduce nothing but Rage, Revenge and Cruelty, and to make *Christendom* more barbarous than *America*.

III. It's contrary to that Method which Christianity prescribes us for the convincing deceived and erroneous Persons ; For the only Remedy our Holy Religion prescribes for the Cure of Errour, is Charity and Forbearance, Piety and Reason : For the Sense and Spirit of Christianity is described in these excellent Words of St. Paul, 2 Tim. 2. 24. *The Servants of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men ; in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ; if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging the Truth.* So that unless we can torture

ture Men without striving with them, and meekly instruct them by cutting their Throats, it's evident by the Text, we must either not persecute Men, or quit the Title of being the Servants of God. So also the same Apostle in Gal. 6. 1. *Brethren, if any Man be overtaken in an Errour, ye that are spiritual, restore such a one in the Spirit of Meekness.* And sure there is some difference between destroying and restoring a Man, between the Halter and the Spirit of Meekness. 'Tis true indeed, the Procedure of the Gospel was more severe and rigorous against wicked and obstinate Hereticks; but then it was not for their Opinions barely, but for the Wickedness of their Opinions, and obstinate Perseverance in them, to the Disturbance of the Church's Peace; both which, I have shew'd you, are excepted Cases. But yet, as the Gospel was a great deal tenderer of making Hereticks than the Church of Rome is, so was it also a great deal gentler in the punishing them: For its utmost Severity against them was Excommunication, which at the worst, did not destroy Mens Souls, but only consigned them to that sad Portion they had deserved, and should have received independently from the Church's Censure: But the primary Design of it was to scare them into a sober Mind; which, if obtained, it proceeded no further: So that in its own nature it was medicinal; and though it was a distasteful and uneasie Potion, by reason it gave the Devil possession of their Bodies, to torture and afflict them; yet in it self 'twas wholesome and restorative, and did no Man hurt, unless he would himself: But if he would be obstinate in his Wickedness, notwithstanding he felt the woful Effects of it, he might thank himself for all that followed; it being his own Obstinacy that actuated the Judgment, and gave a Sting to it. But to destroy a Man's Life, is as strange a Way to cure him of his Errours, as cutting off his Head is to cure him of the Tooth ach: For the only way to reduce him, is to persuade his Understanding, which we shall hardly do by beating out his Brains. 'Tis true indeed, corporal Punishments may make a Man dissemble his Opinion, and profess contrary to his Conscience and Judgment: But they have no no more Virtue in them to inform his Conscience, or rectifie his Judgment, than Syllogisms or Demonstrations have to cure him of the Stone or Strangury; and therefore whatever he may pretend, he cannot think his Opinion truer or falser, because you threaten to wrack and torture him for it; for such Premisses can infer no Conclusion, but only that of his Life. So whilst you attempt by such rough Arguments to force him into your Opinion, you may perhaps vanquish his Courage, but you will never alter his Judgment; and if you make him a Hypocrite, and terrifie him into a Profession of what he doth not believe, instead of erecting a Trophy to God, you shall but build a Monument for the Devil. And as Persecution is a bad Remedy for Errours, so 'tis a worse Antidote against them: For if you consult Ecclesiastical History, you will find, that Fire and Faggot hath made more Hereticks, than it ever destroyed: Witness the *Priscillianists*, who, as *Sulpitius* tells us, were so far from being suppressed by the Death of *Priscilian*, that they were more confirmed by it, and grew much more numerous. And it is the Complaint of one of the *Italian* Inquisitors, that he had found, after forty Years Experience, wherein they had destroyed above 100000 Hereticks, (*Ger. Busdrag. Epist. ad Card. Pisar.*) they were so far from being suppress'd or weaken'd, that they were much more strengthen'd and encreas'd. For there is a popular Pity that follows all Persons in Misery, which breeds Likeness of Affection, and that very often Likeness in Opinion; and so much the rather, because he that persecutes another for his Opinion, gives the Multitude Reason to suspect, that that is the best Argument he can urge against it: Whereas on the Contrary, he that dies for his Opinion, and seals it with his Blood, confirms it with the most popular Argument in the World: For although, [as one says] laying a Wager be an Argument of Confidence rather than of Truth; yet when a Man stakes his Life and Soul, it argues, at least, that he is resigned, and Honest and Charitable, and Noble; and this among weak People, will more advance his Opinion, than Reason and Demonstration: So by persecuting or Errour, we do what in us lies, to Canonize it; and by Crowning of it with the Glo-

ry of Martyrdom, we take an effectual Course to encrease the Number of its Votaries.

IV. And Lastly, It is contrary to that Care and tender Regard of Truth, which Christianity enjoyns us : For in many Instances there is so near a Resemblance between Truth and Errour, that our purblind Reason can hardly distinguish between them ; and therefore if Errour were left to the Persecutions of such fallible Creatures as we, Truth would be exposed to inevitable Danger : For if you set a blind Man to weed your Garden, you must expect that sometimes he will pull up Flowers instead of Weeds. And if we that are so prone to err, should be authorized to root up Errour, 'twould be impossible but we should sometimes mistake, and root up Truth instead of Errour : And therefore our Saviour considering this, hath reserved that Power in his own Hands, as you may see at large in *Matth. 13. 24. &c.* Another Parable put he forth unto them, saying, *The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a Man that soweth good Seed in his Field, and while Men slept, his Enemy came and sowed Tares among his Wheat, and went away.* Upon which, this Man's Servants ask him, in the 28th Verse, if they should go and gather up the Tares ? To which he answers him, *Nay, lest while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up also the Wheat with them : Let both grow together until the Harvest.* By the Field here, all Men agree, we are to understand the Church ; and by the Seed sown in it, that of the pure and sound Doctrines of Religion ; So that all the Difficulty of the Parable lies in understanding what is meant by the Tares, and what by the not gathering the Tares. By the Tares must be meant, either Persons of wicked Lives, or of false and evil Opinions ; and by the not gathering these Tares, must be understood, either the not cutting them off by the Temporal Sword, or the not excommunicating and cutting them off by the Spiritual Sword. But by the Tares cannot be meant Persons of wicked Lives ; for then the Text would forbid the Punishment of Evil Doers. By not gathering the Tares cannot be meant the not cutting them off by the Spiritual Sword ; for then the Text would forbid the Church to excommunicate either wicked Livers, or obstinate Hereticks ; And therefore of necessity, by the Tares must be meant Persons of evil Opinions ; and by the not gathering them, the not destroying them by the Temporal Sword ; and this Interpretation is very much favoured by the Reason that is given of the Prohibition, *lest ye also root up the Wheat with them :* As if he should have said, As for external Wickednesses, I freely leave them to the Lash of Human Judicatures ; the Rectitude or Obliquity of them being far more discernable than of inward Speculations and Opinions ; but I will by no means trust you with the Punishment of Errours, lest through Interest, Passion, or Mistake, you should exterminate the Truth with it : For you being so fallible, and apt to err, it is impossible but sometimes you must miss the Mark, mistake the Wheat for Tares, and hit the Truth, though you aim at Errour. Having thus shewed you, how contrary it is to the Spirit and Genius of Christianity, to destroy Mens Lives upon the score of mere Opinion, or Religion, I shall now conclude what I have said, with one Inference from the whole.

Use. From hence I infer, the Antichristian Tyranny of the Church of Rome, who hath fleshed her self with so many Slaughters, and dyed her Garments so deep in the Blood of Christians, upon no other score, but only their differing from her, in some (at least) disputable and harmless Opinions ; because upon her bare Word, they could not believe Propositions, which to them seemed contrary to Sense, and Reason, and Scripture ; and their Faith had not Stomach enough to digest the fulsome Absurdities, and swallow the grossest Contradictions. Blessed Jesu ! That ever a Church, pretending to be thy Spouse, should be so forgetful of thy Mercies, as to spill the Blood of so many Christians, upon no other Account, but because they could not believe her Absolution such a Philosopher's Stone, as to turn Attrition into effectual Repentance ; and a few Words of a Priest, such a powerful Charm, as to conjure a Man to Heaven in an Instant :
And

And because thou hast made Holiness the sole Condition of Eternal Life, durst not depend upon Confraternities, Stations, and Privilege-Altars, *Agrus Dei's*, little Offices, Amulets, and such like hollowed Baubles; because they could not worship Images, and pray to God and Saints in the same Form of Words, and durst not run from Scripture to uncertain Traditions, and from ancient Traditions unto new Pretences; from reasonable Services into blind Devotions; from believing the Necessity of inward Acts of Piety and Devotion, into a dangerous Temptation of resting upon the *Opus Operatum*, the mere numbering of so many Beads, and saying of so many Prayers! That ever Christians should be destroyed by Christians, for not believing all those monstrous Absurdities, which Transubstantiation implies; that Christ's Body may be in a thousand Places at the same time; that it may stay in a Place while it is going from it; be both in, and out of the same Place, in the same Moment; that it may come from Heaven to Earth, and yet never stir out of Heaven, nor be any where in the Way between; that his whole Body is in each Crumb of each consecrated Wafer; and that without being lessened, all its Parts are crouded up into one single Atom, and lie all within the Compass of a Pin's Head, though it be four Foot long; that though it be whole and intire in every Crumb, and there be ten thousand of these Crumbs in ten thousand distant Places, yet doth it not multiply into ten thousand Bodies, but still remains one and the same. Now what greater Tyranny can there be, than to destroy and massacre Men for not believing such a Mass of palpable Contradictions? And yet, for these, and such like Causes, it is, that *Rome* hath so often washt her barbarous Hands in Protestant Blood; imbroiled the Christian World, and by the Terror of her awful Thunder-bolts, scared Subjects into Rebellion against their lawful Sovereigns, and Sovereigns into Persecution of their natural Subjects: Of the Truth of which, I could give you a thousand Foreign Instances; but in compliance with the Time and Occasion, I shall rather chuse to confine my self at home. To destroy Mens Lives upon the score of Religion, was a Practice never known in *England*, till the time of *Henry the 4th*; who being an Usurper, and so liable to many Enemies, both Foreign and Domestic, sought to endear the Pope to him, who was then Moderator of *Christendom*, by sending him, as a Token of his Love and Duty, the Blood of his Enemies. And for many Years after, this was the yearly Sacrifice our *English* Monarchs were fain to offer up to the *Roman* Idol: And whensoever, through their own Weakness, they feared, or were forced to flatter him, they had no other way to appease the angry Daemon, but by causing their Children to pass through the Fire to him, and glutting his thirsty Vengeance with their Blood. But when afterwards our *English* Monarchs threw off the *Roman* Yoke, and would no longer be the Pope's Leeches; he immediately issueth out his Bulls, and Excommunications to alarm their Subjects into a Rebellion against them: For immediately upon Queen *Elizabeth's* coming to the Throne, Pope *Paul the 4th* refused to acknowledge her, pretending this Crown to be a Fee of the Papacy, and that it was audaciously done of her to assume it without his Leave; and because she would not turn out immediately, when her great Landlord had given her such fair Warning, Pope *Pius the 5th* takes out a Writ of Ejectment, issueth out his Bull, and deposeth her; in which he thus expresseth himself, *Volumus, & Jubemus ut adversus Elizabetham Angliæ Reginam, subditi arma capeffant; It is our Will and Command, that the Subjects of England take up Arms against their Queen.* Upon which followed the Northern Rebellion, and sundry private Attempts of the Papists to murder her. Afterwards Pope *Gregory the 15th*, having two Bastards to provide for, one of his own, and another of the Emperor's, he bestowed the Kingdom of *England* upon the one, and that of *Ireland* upon the other: But neither of these prevailing, *Sixtus the 5th* curses her afresh, and publishes a Crusade against her, and bequeaths the whole Right of her Dominions to *Philip the 2d*, King of *Spain*. But when neither the Pope's Bounty, nor the Blessing of his Successors, nor the *Spanish* Arms, nor *Italian* Arts, could prevail against God's Providence, which, till the End of her Days, pitched its Tents about her, Pope

Clement the 8th, seeing there was no other Remedy, resolved to let her go, like a Heretick as she was, and to take more Care, that another Heretick might not succeed her : For which end he sent over two Breves into *England*, one to the Clergy, and another to the Layity ; commanding them not to suffer any but a Catholick, tho' never so near in Blood, to succeed her : The Design of which was to exclude King *James*, who was the sole Heir apparent to the Crown. Upon which, the Papists endeavoured to their utmost to prevent his coming in, and afterwards to throw him out again : And when neither took effect, at last they resolve to send him to Heaven with a Vengeance, by a Blow of Gun powder ; which was a Villainy so black and odious, that the *Romanists* themselves do blush to own it. And indeed, were it not so apparent from the Confessions of the Traytors themselves, who acknowledged the *Jesuites* to be the Conspirators that egged them on by their pernicious Counsels, swore them to Secrecy by the Holy Trinity, and gave them the Sacrament upon it, that they should neither withdraw themselves from, nor discover it to others without common Consent : I say, were it not for these, and a thousand other notorious Circumstances, one would have thought it impossible, such a Hellish Design could have been acted under the Wing and Patronage of the best Religion that ever was. But he that shall consider the Bloody Principles with which the *Roman* Church hath sophisticated Christianity, must needs confess, that there is no Wickedness so horrid, of which her Religion will not make her capable : For 'tis decreed by the *Lateran* Council, that in case any Prince be a Favourer of Hereticks, the Pope shall discharge his Subjects from their Allegiance, and give away his Kingdom to some Catholick ; who upon rooting out those Hereticks, shall possess it without Contradiction. And 'tis the general Doctrine of her most celebrated Divines, that the Pope hath Power to depose Kings at his pleasure : And this Father *Parsons* determines to be a Point of Faith, to believe it is in the Pope's Power to depose Heretical Princes ; and that Subjects are, upon their being declared Heretical, thereby absolved from all Duty of Obedience to him ; (*Philop. 1. Edict. Elizab. p. 149.*) And this *Bellarmino* proves at large, by giving us sundry Examples of Popes who have deposed Kings and Emperors ; as of *Gregory the 2d*, who deprived the Emperor *Leo* of a great Part of his Dominions, because he opposed the Worship of Images ; of Pope *Zachary*, who deposed *Childerick* of *France* ; of *Gregory the 7th*, who deposed *Henry the 4th*, Emperor of *Germany* ; of *Innocent the 3d*, who deposed the Emperor *Otho the 4th* ; of *Innocent the 4th*, who deposed *Frederick the 2d*, and *Clement the 6th*, who also deposed *Lewis the 6th* ; and so at last gravely concludes, that because they had done so, they might do so still ; (*de Rom. Pont. lib. 5. c. 8.*) as if Wickedness were sanctified by wicked Examples. So also *Gregory de Valentia* affirms (*Tom. 3. in Thom. dis. 1. q. 12. p. 2.*) that an Heretical Prince may by the Pope's Sentence be deprived of his Life, Estate and Sovereignty. But beyond all these, are those Trayterous Positions of *Mariana* the *Spanish* Jesuite ; who affirms (*de Reg. Inst. l. 1. c. 6.*) That it is not only lawful to kill a King upon the Pope's Sentence, but also upon the Verdict of a few learned Doctors : And discouraging *pro* and *con* of the most convenient Way of doing it, at last determines Poysoning to be the most Orthodox, and Catholick. And if we look into the Histories of these last 600 Years, we shall find, their Practice hath made a Bloody Comment on their Doctrines : For in those Days, when Excommunications from *Rome* were so terrible, and all things shrunk at the Flash of those Thunders, it was the ordinary Recreation of those insolent Prelates, to play at Foot-Ball with the Crowns of Princes, and trample on the Necks of Emperors ; as the *Fredericks*, the *Henries*, the *Lodovici*, *Bavari*, found by woful Experience, who were abandoned of their Subjects, their Kindred, their Allies, their own Children ; were trodden under foot, deposed from their Empires, defamed as Hereticks, and chased like Rascals.

These

These goodly Mirrors, one would think, were sufficient to warn all Christian Princes to shake off the Yoke that for so many Ages hath gauled the Necks of their Ancestors. But if after so many woful Examples, there should remain any Doubt of the Tyrannick Cruelties of *Rome*, let us remember that Pair of Royal Sacrifices, the two last *Henries* of *France*, both barbarously murdered by the Pope's Executioners: The First by the Hand of a Fryar, whose Villany was commended by Pope *Sixtus the 5th*, in an Oration to his Cardinals, wherein he compares the Fact with the Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ: (*Orat. Sixt. 5th, printed at Paris, 1589.*) And the Fryar's Virtue and Courage, and fervent Love to God, to that of *Judith* and *Eliazar* in the *Maccabees*. Blessed God! What Wickedness will these Men stick at, the Head of whose Religion cannizeth Regicide, and Christians Murder a meritorious Virtue? And why should the Papists be ashamed to own the *Powder Treason* (which though it may compare with the Blackest Intreagues of Hell, and was foul enough to bring the Devil himself into Disgrace) yet was warranted by the Principles of their bloody Religion? But 'tis the old Maxim of the *Roman* Politicks, never to own an unsuccessful Villainy; and without doubt, had not the *Parisian* Massacre taken Effect, in which thirty thousand Protestants were slaughtered in one Night, the Papists would have as loudly disclaimed that, as now they do the *Powder Treason*: But it being successful, the News of it at *Rome*, as their own *Thuanus* tells us, (*Hist. lib. 53*) was welcomed with Publick Festivals, and Bonfires, and Triumphs; the Pope himself congratulating the inhuman Cruelty of the *French* King, commending the Faith of those Bloody Wretches, whose Hands were imbrued in the Slaughter, and distributing his Paternal Blessings among them: And without all Controversie, had *Faux* and *Catesby* been but as successful as they, their Faith had been as much praised, and their Persons as much blessed; and the *Fifth of November* had been as high a Festival in the *Roman* Calendar, as it is now in the *Englisb*. Thus if you trace the *Romish* Religion in all her late Progresses, you will find, that her Way hath led all along through a Wilderness of Confusion and a Red Sea of Blood: And though now she exerciseth less Cruelties in the World than formerly; yet her Will is the same, her Principles the same, her Documents of cutting Throats the same, though blessed be God, her Power and Interest is abated: For now a-days, Princes are grown too stout to kiss his Holiness's Toe, to hold his Stirrup, and run like Lacqueys at his Heels: Those Golden Days are gone, and he that was wont to command, is fain to intreat his own Children; and as an ingenuous Author hath observed, whilst Princes can stand upon their own Legs, they may go their own Pace, as fast and as slow as they please; but should any Misfortune throw them upon all four, we shall soon see his Holiness get up and ride them what pace he pleases: And being bestrid by such a furious *Jehu*, to be sure they will want neither Whip nor Spur to make them as swift to shed Blood as ever. For thus at present, the *French* King may allow his *Huguenots* what Liberty he pleases, and his Holiness is fain to sit still and be silent; being kept in Awe by that Puissant Monarch, whose Cannon Bullets are grown too strong for his Thunder-bolts: but the Case was otherwise with *Charles the 9th*, who being weakned by Faction, and impoverished by civil Broils, was in a manner necessitated to that infamous Butchery at *Paris*, to appease the Pope and prevent the Excommunication he threatened him, unless he speedily destroyed the *Huguenots* with Fire and Sword: And indeed the Pope is bound both by their Councils and Canons, to destroy Hereticks if he can; and which is all one, to excommunicate their Favourers: For this is decreed in the 4th *Lateran* Council, that Hereticks should be Excommunicated, and then delivered up to the Lash of the Secular Powers: But if the Prince or secular Power being required or admonished by the Church, do not endeavour to their utmost to exterminate and destroy these Hereticks, he shall be presently Excommunicated by the Metropolitan or Arch Bishop; and if within a Year he doth not amend, his Obstinacy shall be signified to the Pope,

Pope, *Ut ex tunc ipse Vassallos ab ejus fidelitate denuntiet absolutos, &c.* That from that time the Pope may denounce his Subjects absolved from their Allegiance to him, (*Conc. Lat. 4. c. 3.*) And Gregory the 13th, in that Famous Bull of his, intituled, *Literæ processus lectæ die Cænæ Domini*, excommunicates all *Hussites, Wiclivites, Zuinglians, Calvinists, Huguenots*, and other Hereticks, together with their Concealers and Favourers; and in general, all those which defend them, (*Collect. divers. Constitut. Pars 3. p. 72.*) So that according to this Bull, a Child cannot conceal his Parents, nor a Prince rescue his Subjects from the Pope's Blood-hounds, under the Penalty of Excommunication. And Pope Julius the 3d, in another Bull, hath determined, *That if any Man examine the Doctrines of the Pope, by the Rule of God's Word, and seeing it is different, chance to contradict it, he shall be rooted out with Fire and Sword*, (*de Vita Ignat. l. 3. c. 21. p. 335.*) Was not this a precious Vicar, do you think, thus to doom Men to Slaughter, for not believing his own unreasonable Dictates, before the infallible Oracles of God himself? And yet those Bulls of the Popes, with the rest of the *Decretals, Extravagants and Clementines*, are all inserted in the Body of the Canon-Law of the Church of Rome, and so are made as good and current Popery as ever was coined in the Council of Trent.

And now, after all this, methinks 'tis impossible we should be so besotted, as to trust the cruel Courtesies of Rome, whose Religion breathes nothing but Blood and Slaughter. The Cry indeed of the Roman Factors among us, is nothing but *Toleration, and Liberty of Conscience*; and since the Laws have proscribed them for their Treasonous Practices, and for swearing themselves Vassals to the Pope, whose Countermands (if they are faithful to their own Principles) must evacuate all their Obligations to their natural Prince, what tragical Exclamations do they make against Persecution? As if they meant to have the Monopoly of it, that no body might persecute but themselves; and though in the Popish Dominions they are fell and rabid as so many *Lybian Tygers*, yet no sooner do they set foot upon the *English Shores*, but, as if there were an Enchantment in the Soil, the Wolves turn Sheep immediately, or at least, disguise themselves in Sheeps Clothing: But if ever these sweet and merciful Gentlemen get into the Saddle again, we shall soon find them in another Note; and Persecution would be Zeal again, and Racks and Gibbets, Catholick Arguments; and there will be no way to illuminate the Understandings of us Hereticks, like the Light of a flaming Faggot: For how can we expect it should be otherwise, when we reflect upon what is past, when the *Marian Days* are yet within our Prospect? And 'tis not half an Age ago since *Ireland* swam in Protestant Blood, which was spilt by the Instigation of some of these fawning Hypocrites, who now declaim forsooth for *Liberty of Conscience*, and despise Persecution and all its Works. But this Pretence, it's evident, is only a Copy of their Countenances; and without all Controversie, the Bottom of their Design is only to persuade us to let them grow till they are strong enough to cut our Throats: For 'tis the Subtilty of these Harpies never to shew their Talons till they have their Prey within their Reach. But if what they pretend, were real, why do they not allow what they plead for, and indulge that Liberty to Dissenters abroad, which they here crave for themselves? Why do they not as much exclaim against the *Spanish Inquisition*, which hath been confirmed by so many Bulls of their own Popes, as they do against the *English Laws*; and condemn the barbarous Cruelties of the one, as well as the milder Severities of the other? For till they do so, we have reason to believe, that 'tis not against Persecution they exclaim, but against being persecuted. But in the mean time, how can we expect that they should be merciful to our Bodies, whose Religion damns our Souls? Or, if ever they get uppermost, [which God prevent] They that are so uncharitable now, as to shut us out of Heaven, should be so charitable then, as not to drive us out of the World! For this is a Maxim founded upon the Experience of all Ages, That that Religion which damns us when it is weak, will burn us when it is able.

Wherefore,

Wherefore, since God in his Mercy hath delivered us from the *Romish* Tyranny, let us with thankful Hearts extol and praise his Goodness, and take heed for the future, lest by our Divisions or Apollacies we return again unto that Yoke of Bondage: And since the Emissaries of *Rome* are now so busily pursuing their old Maxim, *Divide & Impera*, and blowing the Coals of our Divisions, in hope at last to warm their Hands at our Flames; O that we would now study the Ways of Peace and Reconciliation! and not like the miserable *Jews*, fall out among our selves, while the *Roman* is at our Gates: For all the time we are contending in the Ship, our Enemy is boring a Hole at the Bottom; and while we are fomenting our unhappy Differences, and tearing our own Wounds wider, the Priest and Jesuit are at work in our Doublets; who, ever since their Gun-powder Treason was defeated, have been strewing Trains of Wild fire among our selves, to make us our own Executioners, and blow us up by our own Hands: For what else hath been their Business among us, but only to raise Sects and Factions, and sow Discords and Divisions in the Church of *England*, which, they know, is the only Bulwark of the Protestant Religion among us? O, would to God, we would once heartily attempt to countermine them! As we might yet easily do, would we but once lay aside our Unchristian Passions and Prejudices, and study mutual Compliances, and prefer Religion before a Faction, and abate some little Punctilioes to the soberer, and more governable Dissenters. These things, if they may obtain amongst us, would yet undoubtedly secure us against the Attempts of our Adversaries, and render their most hopeful Designs desperate, and unfeasible. But if we will be deaf to all the Arguments which our common Interests, and Dangers suggest to us; if we will still squander into Sects and Parties, and nothing will serve our turns, but the Ruin of that poor Church which for so many Years hath been the Shelter and Sanctuary of the Protestant Religion; the time may come, perhaps, when we may dearly repent of our own Follies, and remember with Tears in our Eyes, that we had once an Opportunity to be happy. Let me therefore beseech you, even by all that Love you bear to the Protestant Religion, to your own Safety, and to the Lives and Souls of your Posterity, to lay aside all Faction, Bitterness and Animosity; lest by your Unchristian Divisions you open the Flood gates of *Popery* on your selves, and cut a Gap to let in the *Stygian Lake* of Ignorance, Idolatry, Superstition and Blood: Which God of his infinite Mercy avert. *To whom be Honour, and Glory, and Power, and Dominion, for ever.*

SERMON III.

Preach'd before

The Artillery - Company of London at
St. Mary Le Bow, September 15, 1680.

PROV. 28. 1.

The Wicked flee when no Man pursues ; but the Righteous are bold as a Lion.

THE two great Ingredients that go into the Composition of an accomplished Soldier, are Courage and good Conduct: As for the latter of these, it is the peculiar Subject of your Profession, and falls not under the Cognizance of our spiritual Tactics; nor was it ever well for the World when the Pulpits, which were designed for Oracles of the Gospel of Peace, rung with Battles and Alarms; and that *ἡμεῖς σάλπιγξ*, that soft and still Trumpet of Meekness, and Charity, and Obedience, which should sound from hence, was out-noised and drowned with the Thunder of Drums, and the Roaring of Cannons. Sure I am, in our Commission we have no Instructions to put on any Armour, but the *whole Armour of God*, to list any Volunteers but for Heaven, or proclaim any War but between Men and their Lusts, from which all other Wars and Fightings do proceed. And being of so distant a Profession, we may very well be excused, if we understand not the Language of your Discipline, if we cannot talk in Rank and File, and Flank and Rear our Discourses with Military Allusions; in which it is as easie for us to be absurd and ridiculous, as for a freshwater Soldier, that being to make a Speech to a Company of Sailors, will needs interlard his Harangue with Terms of Navigation. Wherefore in Reverence to your Skill and Judgment in your own Profession, I shall chuse to leave *Hercules's* Club in his own Hands, who knows much better than I, how to wield and manage it; it being, in my Opinion, not altogether so decent for a Divine to read Lectures of War before *Hannibal*.

But as for that other Ingredient of a good Soldier, *viz.* Courage and Resolution (it being a Christian Virtue, and as such, necessary, not only (though more especially) for you, but for all others who intend to continue faithful Soldiers under the common Captain of our Salvation) it is upon this account, a very proper Argument both for the Speaker and the Hearers, and as suitable to the Place, as it is to the Occasion: And therefore in compliance with both, I have chosen this Text, in which you have Cowardice and Courage resolved into their first Principles, *The Wicked flee when no Man pursues ; but the Righteous is bold as a Lion.*

In these Words you have all Mankind distinguished by their proper Characters into two sorts: The first is the *Wicked*; under which Name all bad Men, of whatsoever Denomination, are comprehended, whether they be irreligious in their Belief, profane in their Manners, or hypocritical in their Designs and Intentions; and the Character here, by which they are all distinguished, is, that they *flee when no Man pursues*, *i. e.* They are of such base and timorous Spirits, that they are ready to run away from the least Shadow of Danger, though it hath nothing of Substance or Reality in it; and being haunted with an ill boding Mind, flee before the Spectres of their own Fancies. Which Words are not to be so understood, as if every wicked Man were a Coward; for that contradicts Experience; and we know, there is a sort of Valour which naturally springs out of the very *Crafts* and Temper of Mens Bodies, which is nothing else but a certain *Impetus*, or brisk Fermentation of the Blood and Spirits: And this is common to bad Men with good, accordingly as they happen into a warm and vigorous Constitution. The meaning therefore is, that they are Cowards in their Causes; that their Wickedness naturally tends to effeminate them; and will certainly do it, if it be not strongly counter-influenced by the Vigour of their Bodily Temper. The second sort into which Mankind is here distinguished, is, the *Righteous*; by which Phrase the Scripture is wont to express all good Men in general; and that for very good Reason; because all Instances of Goodness whatsoever, are in Strictness, *Righteousness*, either to God, or to our selves, or to our Neighbours: So that Justice or Righteousness, is the common Point whence all the Lines of our Duty are drawn, and wherein they all center.

Now of this sort of Men the proper Character is, that they are as *bold as a Lion*. Which Words do not import every good Man to be actually a *Cor-delion*, to be as bold and stout-hearted as that courageous Animal is, before whom all the Beasts of the Forest do tremble: For as some bad Men are valiant by Nature, so are some Good timorous and faint-hearted; and it is a very hard thing to cure by Discipline that which is the natural Defect of Constitution. This Expression must be understood in the same mitigated Sense as the former, *The Righteous are bold*, *i. e.* their Righteousness, tends to make them so; it hath an animating Virtue in it, as will (if it be not over-power'd by an invincible Timorousness of Temper) convert a Poultron into a Hero, imbolden the meanest Spirited to confront the grimmest Danger, and charge it with an undaunted Resolution: For thus the Scripture usually speaks of Men, as if they actually were what they have great Cause and Reason to be. Thus in *Isa. lvii. 20.* *The Wicked are like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt*, *i. e.* they are continually agitated with their own restless Thoughts, just like the Sea with its reciprocal Tides: Not that this is always actually their Condition; but that they have always just Reason to be so. So *Prov. xvi. 3.* *Righteous Lips are the Delight of Kings, and they love him that speaketh right*; which is not so to be understood, as if in Fact it were always so; for Experience too often evinces the contrary: But the meaning is, that Kings, above all Men, have Reason to delight in Men of Truth, and Honesty, and Fidelity. And so in the Text, *The Wicked flee when no Man pursues*; that is, a wicked Man hath great Reason to be timorous: For he hath all the Moral Causes of Baseness and Cowardize within his Breast: *But the Righteous is bold as a Lion*, *i. e.* he hath Reason to be so, his Mind being inspir'd with the most pregnant Principles of a brave and undaunted Resolution.

The Words being thus explained, the Sense of them Resolves into this Proposition, *That Wickedness naturally tends to dishearten and cowardize Men; but Righteousness and Goodness, to encourage and imbolden them.* The Truth of which I might easily demonstrate by an Induction of Particulars, were it proper to draw a List of those ancient Heroes, whose Names are renowned in the Memoirs of Fame, the greatest Part of whom were as illustrious for their

Piety and Goodness, as for their Valour and great Achievements; and who, as the Historian observes of the ancient *Romans*, conquered much more by the Charms of their Virtues, than by the Terror of their Swords. But I am not at Leisure to tell Stories; and therefore for the Confirmation of the Argument in Hand, I shall endeavour as briefly as I can, to represent to you what those things are which do naturally contribute to the making Men courageous, and to shew you, that they are all to be found in Righteousness, and their Contraries in Wickedness; which if I can make good, I doubt not, will abundantly convince you, that the best way to be good Soldiers, is to be good Men; and that though you may furnish your selves with Art and Conduct in the Field, yet you can never acquire true Courage and Bravery, till you have been trained and exercised under the Banner of Jesus.

Now to make Men truly valiant and courageous, these six things are necessary.

First, That they be free, and within their own Command.

Secondly, That they be well hardened to endure Difficulties and Inconveniences.

Thirdly, That they be well satisfied in the Nature of their Actions and Undertakings.

Fourthly, That they have a hopeful Prospect of being well seconded.

Fifthly, That they have a probable Security of good Success.

Sixthly, That they be born up with the Expectation of a glorious Reward: All which Causes of Courage are to be found in Righteousness, and their direct Contraries in a sinful and wicked Course of Life.

I. One Cause that very much contributes to the making Men courageous, is their being free, and within their own Command: For Slavery naturally depresses the Mind, and by accustoming Men to a severe and rigorous Treatment, habituates them to Fear and Pusillanimity. It is no new Observation, that Slaves are generally Cowards; of the Truth of which we have many woful Instances in the World: For how many Nations are there who were heretofore renowned for their Courage and Puissance, when they enjoyed their Liberties and Properties, under gentle and benign Governments, that are now utterly unmanned and dispirited by Oppression and Slavery? But now a righteous Man can never be enslaved, because he hath gotten the Victory of himself, and is his own Master; he hath train'd up his Passions to a severe Obedience to his Reason, and so has all his Motions under his own Command; and it being in his Power (at least in a good Measure) not to love any thing but what he hath good Reason to love; not to desire any thing but what he hath fair Hope to enjoy; not to delight in any thing but what is in his Power to possess and keep; it being, I say, in his Power to be affected as he pleases, and to regulate his own Motions according as he thinks fit and reasonable; he may chuse whether he will be a Coward or no: And should the grimmest Danger stare him in the Face, yet supposing him to have such a Command of himself, as not to desire what he cannot have, not to dread what he cannot prevent, not to grieve and vex at what he cannot avoid; he may throw down the Gauntlet to it, and defie it to do its worst.

Now one great Office of Righteousness is to do right to a Man's self, to rescue him from the Tyranny of his Passions, and reduce him under the Command of his Reason; and the more successful it is in this great Undertaking, the more valiant and magnanimous it must necessarily render us: For the more a Man's Passions are subdued to his Reason, the more Presence of Mind he will have in all Dangers and Difficulties, and the more his Reason will be to counsel and advise him, and to fortifie his Heart with brave Considerations. So that when a Man hath made any considerable Progress in the Conquest of himself, he will be so much in his own Power, that no Danger will be able to divide him from himself, or scare him from the Post of his Reason; and while Death is whizzing about his Ears, and Blood and Slaughter, Terror and Confusion are round about him, his Mind will be invironed with invincible Thoughts, and guarded with such puissant Considerations,

siderations, that no outward Force will be able to approach it. And thus Freedom (you see) from the Slavery of Passion, which is an Effect of Righteousness, is an effectual Cause of Courage and Magnanimity.

But in Wickedness a great Part of this Slavery consists: For in this State Men are entirely governed by Passion and Appetite: As, for their Reason, that sits by as an idle Spectator of the brutish Scene of their Actions, and intermeddles no farther in it, than to censure and condemn it, having no other Office allow'd it, but to cater for their Appetites, and enable them to play the Brutes with greater Luxury and Relish; and being under the Command of such Masters as these, we are out of our own Power, and cannot dispose of our selves as we please: For either our Passions and Appetites must be governed by our Reason, or by the Goods and Evils that are without us; and if these govern us, we are not our own Men, but do live in subjection to a Foreign Power; and we must be what the things without us will have us, and not what our own Mind and Reason: Our Mind must turn about like as the Wind blows, and like Water, we must take our Form from the Vessels we are poured into; and when the Passions and Appetites that over-rule us, are thus over-ruled by the Chances and Contingences without us, how is it possible we should be truly courageous? For now when any Danger looks us in the Face, we can have no present Relief from our Reason, having all along dis-used our selves to consult and advise with it, and so every Alarm of Danger from without will presently raise a Tumult within, and put the whole Soul into an Uproar; in which the Mind is left naked of all Relief, and utterly abandoned of those wise and brave Thoughts which should guard and defend it. And a Man's Thoughts and Considerations being thus defeated and put to the Rout, he must either sink under his Danger, or charge headlong upon it fool-hardily: For now he hath no other Courage to support him, but either that of a Mastiff, that fights because his Blood is in brisk Fermentation; or that of a Rat, that flees in his Enemy's Face, because he is desperate of escaping.

II. Another Cause that mightily contributes to the making Men courageous, is their being well hardened to endure Difficulties and Inconveniencies: For how distant soever a State of Softness and Delicacy is from that of Slavery; yet it concentrates with it in the Effect, and by a different Quality produces the same base and unmanly Temper. For as Slavery crows the Spirit by rigorous and servile Usage, and suppresses and stifles all its generous Emotions; so Softness and Delicacy doth so melt and dissolve it, that it hath not the Firmness to resist any violent Impressions; but is ready to shrink at the least Touch of Evil, or Appearance of Danger; having been accustomed to nothing but Pleasure, and wrapt up in Ease and Voluptuousness: And hence we see, that though the Valour and Courage of Nations be very much owing to the Temper of the Climes in which they are situated; yet by the Exercise of Temperance, and severe Virtue, the Inhabitants of the most effeminate Climes have sometimes improved themselves into the most Heroick and Magnanimous of all Nations; as the *Romans* and *Persians*, for instance. As on the contrary, those who by the Temperament of their native Air and Country, are naturally the most hardy and courageous, have many times by their dissolute Manners, been broken and dispirited into the most wretched Cowards; as the *English*, for instance: Who, tho' they have been ever remarked for a People of a daring and undaunted Genius, have yet sometimes been so melted by their own Luxuries, as that they became Preys to every Dog that hunted them.

But now Righteousness including in it those severe Virtues of Industry and Patience, Temperance and Mortification of our Appetites, doth effectually contribute to the confirming and hardening the Tempers of Men, and the taking off that Softness and Delicacy of Spirit, which renders them so tender and impetive: So that by exercising our selves in these Manly Virtues, by inuring our selves to an Active Life, and to bear Evils and Injuries with a brave Indifferency; by reducing our Appetites to the Measures of Nature, and moderately disciplining them

with Fasting and Abstinence, we shall by degrees be so steeled against Hardships and Difficulties, that that which makes effeminate Minds to flinch and startle, will scarce be able to make any Impression upon us. For as the Light of the Sun, and the Freshness of the Air, which are apt to offend those that are tender and sickly, are not only tolerable, but delightful to Men of hail and vigorous Constitutions: So many of those little Hardships, which do so trouble and incommode the Tender and Delicate, are so far from disturbing the Patient and Temperate, that they only refresh and divert them. And it is such a Mind only that is fit for a Soldier, that will enable him to undergo the glorious Toils and Fatigues of War, to endure a hard March in the Day, and to sleep upon a harder Pillow at Night; to follow Victory through Heat and Cold, Thirst and Famine, Sweat and Blood, and seize and pluck it from the Arms of Hazards and Difficulties, wherewith it is compassed and surrounded. These are things that require a firm, a hardy Mind that hath been trained up in Severity, and is grown strong, and hail, and vigorous in the Exercise of a manly Virtue.

But now Wickedness softens and dissolves the Temper, by letting loose the Desires and Appetites of our Flesh to Sensuality and Voluptuousness, to Rioting and Drunkenness, to Chambering and Wantonness, to Pride and Vanity, to Gluttony and Idleness, and all manner of effeminate Delicacy and Dissoluteness, which are such Vices as will emasculate the bravest Mind, and by Degrees spoil the Strain of the most valorous Nations: And were I to prescribe for the cowardizing of a Nation, it should be the Bowl of Intemperance, the Bed of Sloth, and a *Dalilah's* Lap; which are Charms sufficient to effeminate a Hero, and metamorphose a Lion into a timorous Hare: For when Men have been trained up in Excess and Voluptuousness, and their Minds are contempered and naturalized to it, the least Hardship or Difficulty will be terrible to them: So that if ever they should be forced out of the Lap of Pleasure, into the Lills of War, ill Quarters and a hard March will kill them without a Battle; and the least Sense of Pain or Appearance of Danger, will presently strike their Spirits and Air, and turn all their Blood into a trembling Jelly. If the Business of Soldiers were only to wear a Scarf, or a Feather, or to swelter an Hour or two in Buff; if they were to fight in a Field of Down, and to spill no other Blood but that of the Grape, there is no doubt but the School of *Epicurus* would make an incomparable Nursery for the Camp. But to march under a Load of Armour all Day, and then to freeze to the Ground at Night; to sleep with Drums in their Ears, and be awaked with Alarms; to run on upon Spears, and charge at the Mouths of Cannons whilst they are spitting Fire, and roaring out Destruction; these are such rude and scurvy things, as will never be endured by a soft and delicate Epicure.

III. Another Cause that mightily contributes to the making Men courageous, is their being well satisfied with themselves, and with the Nature of their Actions and Undertakings: For our Understanding being our leading Faculty, the Eye that is to direct the Feet of our Practice, and to guide and manage all our voluntary Motions; it is impossible that whilst that doth either disapprove or doubt of our Actions, we should ever be able to act with Steadiness and Assurance: For while a Man acts with a mis-giving Mind; and that which should be the Guide of his Actions, is dissatisfied with his Way, he walks like a benighted Traveller in a dangerous Road, and is fain to feel out his Steps, and tread gingerly, and cautiously, lest he should stumble into a Bog or a Precipice; and so being accustomed to act with Fear and Anxiety, his Courage dissolves, and his Heart grows creeping and timorous.

But now the Righteous Man acts with the full Consent and Approbation of his Mind, and has no By-ways from the Road of Reason and Conscience; but keeping straight forward, as he doth, in the plain Tracts of Eternal Goodness, he treads firmly and boldly, being secure of the Ground he goes upon, and is neither ashamed nor afraid of his own Actions; which being such as his best and purest Reason approves, have the cheerful *Euges* and Applauses of his Conscience continually echoing and resounding after them; and this animates his Courage,

rage, and invigorates his Heart with a generous Confidence and Assurance; in the Sense of this he can smile upon Misfortune, bid defiance to Danger, and bear up his Head in the lowest Condition. For as long as his own Mind doth neither threaten nor accuse him, he can retire into himself when he is driven out of other Retreats, and there live merry and secure in despite of the World: And while he can house himself in the Sense of his own Virtue and Innocence, he hath an impregnable Shelter against all Storms from without: Well therefore might the Apostle call it, *The Breastplate of Righteousness*, Ephes. vi. 14. it being that which secures us against all outward Violence, and renders our Minds invulnerable by the smartest Blows of Misfortune.

But so long as a Man lives wickedly, he can never be satisfied with himself, because in the whole course of his Actions he contradicts his own Reason, and offers Violence, to those eternal Laws of Righteousness and Goodness which are inseparably interwoven with his Faculties: So that whenever he comes to appear before himself, to answer for his Actions at his own Tribunal, his own Mind explodes and condemns him; and, like a false *Renegado*, as he is, from the natural Principles of his Reason, he is fain to run the Gantelope through the Terrors and Reproaches of his own Conscience; which he hath no other way to escape, but by running out of himself, and taking sanctuary in the Crowd of his Lusts or secular Affairs and Diversions: For, as *Tertullian* observes, *Omne Malum aut Timore aut Pudore Natura perfudit; Nature hath poured Fear or Shame upon the Face of all Wickedness*: Both which do naturally intimidate our Minds, and for different Reasons incline us to run away; Shame, that we may not be seen; and Fear, that we may not be taken. When therefore Men have always these two Furies at their Heels, haunting and pursuing them throughout the whole Course of their Actions, what wretched Cowards must they be, when any outward Danger or Calamity approaches them? When all is smooth and prosperous without, they may shelter themselves there from the Persecutions of their Conscience; and when all is calm and serene within, they may shelter themselves there from the Persecutions of the World: But when both are bestormed, whether can they flee? When Danger and Destruction are drawn up in Battle-array against us from without, and we are alarm'd at the same time with the Shame and Terror of a guilty Conscience from within, so that we are charged all at once Front and Rear, and can neither go on, nor retreat, without cutting our way through Horror and Confusion; This is enough to disarm the stoutest Resolution, and sink the Courage of a Lion into a panick Dread and Desperation.

IV. Another Cause which very much contributes to the making Men courageous, is their having a hopeful Prospect of being well seconded: For when a Man apprehends that he is left all alone in the midst of Danger, or that he must encounter it with unequal Forces; that he is not back'd with sufficient Auxiliaries, or that the Advantage of Strength and Power lies on the other side, it must needs be a mighty Allay to his Courage. Now the greatest Power that we can either dread, or depend on, is God's; and therefore according as we apprehend him to be engaged either for, or against us, our Courage must necessarily rise or sink: For the Apprehensions of God and his Providence, are so natural to us, and do cleave so close to our Minds, that though with our jovial Airs we may sometimes lull them asleep, yet the least Alarm of Danger usually rouses and awakes them, and puts our Mind upon the Enquiry whether he be for, or against us; and according to the Answer we receive from that Bosome-Oracle, or our good or bad Conscience, we are naturally Confident or Afraid.

Now *Righteousness*, being the Crown and Glory of God's own Nature, and that for which he infinitely loves and esteems himself, can never fail wheresoever it resides, to engage him of its side. When therefore we are so fully assured, that the *righteous Lord loves Righteousness*: upon the Testimony of our Conscience, that we are sincerely righteous; we cannot but conclude him to be our Ally and Confederate, and consequently that our Interest is his, and his Power ours; and when I have his all-seeing Eye to direct, and his all-powerful Arm to assist and second me;

me ; when I have all the Attributes of his infinite Nature pitching their Tents, like Guardian Angels, about me, and my Head is cover'd in the Day of Battle with the impenetrable Helmet of his Providence ; with what an undaunted Resolution must such a Persuasion inspire me ; We have a late and woful Instance among our selves of the Courage with which a false Persuasion that God was with them, did animate and inspire Men, when they were wont to say Grace to their bloody Barquets, and rise from their Knees with an Enthusiastick Assurance, and so run on to the Battle, flusht with powerful Incomes, and Manifestations of Victory ; when the flaming Zealots fell on with Psalms in their Mouths, and chased the huffing Hector's ; and notwithstanding the Disadvantage of the bad Poetry, and the worse Cause, the Psalms proved too hard for their Oaths and Blasphemies : When therefore upon firm and rational Principles upon turning their Eyes from God to themselves, upon comparing Grace with Grace, and Feature with Feature, and surveying the fair Agreement of their Nature with his, they are thoroughly perswaded and satisfied, that he is their Friend ; this must needs mightily animate their Courage, and enable them to bear up against the most threatening Dangers.

But when a Man is conscious to himself, that he is in Rebellion against God, and thereupon apprehends himself, not only cashier'd from his Protection, but also exposed to his Almighty Vengeance ; this must needs render him timorous and faint-hearted, if he hath any Consideration about him : For alas ! Who can be courageous against God ? What Heart can bear up against the Terror of his Thunder-bolts ? which are always shot with such an infallible Aim, that none can escape, and with such an invincible Force, that none can resist them ? So that a wicked Soldier must either forego his Reason or his Courage, and degenerate into a Craven or a Brute : For with what Heart can he look an Enemy in the Face, when he considers that the Lord of Hosts is against him ; who can look him into nothing, and confound him with the Breath of his Nostrils when he pleases ; who can array the whole Creation against him ; and whilst his Enemies from below are thundering Volleys of Destruction at him, can play upon him from above with all the Artillery of Heaven, and cause the Stars in their Courses to fight against him ? What a miserable Plight must the poor Wretch be in, if he hath any sober Thoughts about him, when Heaven, and Earth, and his own Conscience, are in Confederacy against him, and are storming all at once about his Ears ? But I must hasten. Again,

V. Another Cause that very much contributes to the making Men courageous, is, their having a probable Security of good Success : For Hope is the Spur of Valour, that quickens and puts Life into it, that revives it when it is drooping, and supplies it with fresh Recruits of Spirits and Vigour when it is languishing, and ready to expire ; and when once Hope, which is the Soul of it, is departed from it, it presently falls prostrate, or converts into desperate Rage.

But as for the Righteous, such is their Condition, that they can never be hopeless ; because while they continue such, they live in a constant Dependence upon the Protection of that God, who over-rules and disposes all the Events that can befall them ; and being continually animated with this Persuasion, that there is nothing can happen to them, but by his Decree or Permission, who is infinitely wise, and knows what is best for them ; infinitely good, and wills what he knows ; infinitely powerful, and doth what he will : They will still be expecting good Issues from the worst Events ; and so their Hope will shine bright upon them in the darkest Condition. When their Enemies are threatening or designing Mischief against them, they know that their Almighty Guardian and Protector holds their Malice in a Chain, and that it can never bite, how fiercely soever it may bark at them, unless he let it loose ; which they are secure he will never do, but for such wise and good Ends as they themselves would approve of, did they but fully comprehend them. They have duly considered what their Enemies can inflict ; and do find, that the worst of it is tolerable, whilst they have a God to depend upon ; that though Banishment be a dreadful Word, it imports but little more

more in it self than Travel, or a long Voyage, which is a voluntary Exile ; that unless they will, they cannot be banish'd from God ; and that so long as they secure their Innocence, their Conscience, and their Hope of Heaven, they may make themselves a Paradise in the most barren Wilderness ; that if they should suffer Imprisonment, and be secluded from Human Conversation, it is no such dismal thing for a Man to be kept within doors ; to be snatcht out of the Croud and Hurry of the World, and forced to retire within himself, and converse with God, and Heaven, and his own Thoughts ; that these are Company enough to entertain a Man's Solitudes, and to supply the Want of the Noise of the World, in which there is commonly so much Folly and Discord, that if they should be tormented to Death with Instruments of Cruelty, which is the worst thing that can happen to them, they must have died at last, though not by such unnatural Means ; only now they die a little sooner, and so anticipate their Eternal Happiness ; and that if they had died a Natural Death, probably the Torment might have been much greater ; that they might have languished much longer under the Gout, or Stone, or Strangury, than under the Hands of the Executioner, and endured the same Degree of Torment without the Comfort of dying in a brave Cause, or of being assured of an immortal Recompence. And having thus consider'd things round about, their Hope bears us bravely against all Events ; and from the blessed Rock of Salvation, where it dwells, looks down upon the Waves of their Enemies Malice, and smiles at their vain Attempts to overwhelm it, and securely expects till they have dashed themselves in Pieces, and are forced to retire back again in empty Passion and Foam. Thus, while we depend upon God, in whose Hand is the Disposal of all Success, we shall never want Reason to hope well ; and whatsoever Dangers may threaten, or Mischiefs befall us, our Courage will be still supported with this brave Persuasion, *That nothing can come amiss that comes from a good God, who knows how to extract Good out of the worst of our Evils, and to render the rankest Poisons cordial.*

But as for the Wicked, they can expect nothing from God, whilst they continue so, but dire and dismal Effects : For all their Actions being open Defiances to his Authority, they have all the reason in the World to conclude, that he will deal with them as Enemies, that he will throw them from his Care and Protection for ever, and persecute them with Fire and Sword to eternal Destruction. When therefore they consider, that he hath the Disposal of all those Events that befall them, they cannot but see great Cause to be afraid of every thing ; to suspect even his Favours, lest there should be a Snake in the Grass ; lest he should tume their Enjoyments with Poison, and infuse a Disease into every Breath of their Air ; lest he should make their Table a Snare to them, and serve in the plentiful Provisions of it only to fatten them for the Day of Slaughter ; lest those little Successes he sometimes gives them, should be only a Retreat of his Providence to draw them into an *Ambuscado*, and involve them into forer Mischiefs ; lest when he rescues from less Evils, it should be with an Intent to reserve them for greater ; and when he delivers them from the Frogs, and the Lice, and the Locusts, he should be only preparing a more glorious Vengeance for them, and contriving to overwhelm them in the Red Sea ; in a Word, lest he should heap the good things of this World upon them, as the *Romans* did their Ear-Rings and Jewels on the treacherous Vestal, only to crush and smother them, and carry them aloft, as the Eagle did the Tortois, with an intent to give them a more fatal Downfall. For how can they be secure of any thing that comes from the Hand of that God, who is inflamed with such a just Indignation against them ? And then when any Danger is marching towards them, they have nothing but the Arm of Flesh to confide in ; and if that prove too weak, they are desperate. But how can they be secure that this should prevail, when they know there are such numberless Accidents under the Command of their Almighty Enemy, that can either disarm it, or turn the Point of its Weapon on it self ? But then if any Storm happen to overtake them, whither can they go ? Alas, they have no Har-
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bour to put in at in all the Dominions of God; no Promise of Deliverance, no Security of Support or Protection, no Ground to hope for any future Advantage from the present Calamity; but, like miserable Wrecks, they are abandoned to the Mercy of the Winds and Waves, and in a fearful Expectation how the next Billow will dispose of them, whether it will dash them on a Rock, or drive them on a Quick-land; and in such dismal Circumstances, who, but a Mad Man, can be courageous?

VI. And Lastly, Another Cause which very much contributes to the making Men courageous, is, the Expectation of a Glorious Reward. Good Pay will make Brave Soldiers: For when Men have a good Interest in any difficult Undertaking, that will buoy up their Courage, and render them firm and resolute against all the Dangers and Difficulties that oppose them: Whereas when they have little or nothing at stake, they are commonly indifferent whether they win or lose. Reward therefore being the Center of our Hope, and Hope the Support of our Courage, we shall in all Attempts be more or less courageous, proportionably to the Reward which we expect to reap from our Labour.

But what Reward is comparable to that of a Righteous Man? who lives upon the blessed Hope of being translated when he goes from hence, to those immortal Regions of Bliss and Joy, where all the Blessed Inhabitants live in a continued Fruition of their utmost Wishes, being every Moment entertained with fresh and enravishing Scenes of Pleasure; where all their Happiness is Eternal, and all their Eternity nothing else but one continued Act of Love, and Praise, and Joy, and Triumph; where there are no Sighs or Tears, no Intermixtures of Sorrow or Misery; but every Heart is full of Joy, and every Joy is a Quintessence, and every happy Moment is crowned with some fresh and new Enjoyment; and the being animated with such a glorious Hope, is enough to make the most Crest-faln Soul courageous: For the worst that any Danger can threaten, is Death: And what need he be afraid of passing this cold fatal Stream, that sees a Heaven on the farther Shore? Such a blessed Prospect is enough to enable a Man to out-face the Fearful of Fearfuls, and to charge through all his Horrors with an undaunted Resolution; to make a Soldier *mock at Fear*, like the warlike Horse in *Job*, and to stand at the Mouth of a Breach, while it is spewing Thunder and Lightning: For while he is possess'd with this blessed Hope, every Danger beckons him to Heaven, and every Wound is a Sally-port into a blessed Eternity; and being assured in his own Mind, that the Bullet that strikes his Body to the Ground, must shoot up his Soul above the Stars; and that if it be his Hap to fall in the Battle, he shall certainly rise from the Bed of Honour to the Crown of Glory; he laughs at the impotent Threatenings of Danger, and bravely defies it to do its worst.

But the quite contrary to this is the Case of wicked Men: For though whilst they stand at a distance from Danger, they may make a shift to drown their Sense of another World in deep Draughts and loud Laughter: Yet we usually find, that when Danger draws near them, and begins to shake its Dart at their Breast, *Natura recurrit*, the bold Men begin to quake, and are seiz'd with dismal Expectations of a fearful State of things on the other side the Grave. It is *Plato's* Observation long since, [*de Rep. lib. 1.*] Ἐπειδὴν τις ἐγγύς ἢ τὸ οἶσθαι πλευτήσας εἰσέρχεται αὐτῷ φόβος. δὲ φροντὶς περὶ ὧν ἐν τῷ περὶ αὐτὸν ἔχ' εἰσέει. When a Man imagines himself within danger of dying, he is usually seiz'd with a great Horror and Anxiety concerning those future things which before he never thought of. Now how must it needs daftardize a Soldier, if when he is going into the Battle, the near Approach of his Danger should awaken such Thoughts as these in his Mind? I am now entring upon the Confines of the World of Spirits; and if by any of those winged Messengers of Death that fly about me, I should be dispatch'd thither, Lord, what will become of me? My Conscience condemns me, and these numerous Guilts that stare me in the Face, bode me a wo-
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ful Fate there ; so that I plainly perceive, I am marching upon the Brinks of a black and dismal Eternity ; and that if I happen to fall, I am lost and undone for ever. If with such Thoughts as these about him, he dares stand his Ground, he is a courageous Sinner indeed, fit for a Forlorn Hope : But alas, how is it possible he should keep up his Heart, when his misgiving Conscience suggests such fearful Thoughts as these to him ; when it tells him, that his Enemies Artillery are charged with Hell, and if they hit, will strike him down into the bottomless Abyfs ; that their Swords will cut through to his very Soul, and wound it to Eternal Death ; that every Bullet they shoot at him, brings with it a Passport to a Woful Eternity ; and that at the Mouth of every Wound they give him, there waits a Devil to seize his Soul as it fallies forth, and carry it Captive to the dark Prisons of the Damned ? Doubtless, such Dire Abodings as these, which are natural to Guilty Consciences, must necessarily appale the Stoutest Resolution.

And now, having given you such an abundant Proof of the Truth of the Assertion in the Text, I shall conclude the whole with one Word of Advice to you of this Honourable Society.

You are a Body of Men, whose bad or good Conduct of your selves is of very great Importance to the Publick, each Man of you being virtually a Company ; having not only Interest enough to raise your own Men, but also Skill enough to form them into Excellent Soldiers. You are the standing Mint, where the brave *English* Mettle is to be coined, and to receive its Martial Stamp and Impression : And being so, it is, doubtless, very much in your Power, either to raise, or to debase it : And since it is from your Discipline that your Soldiers must learn their Manners, as well as their Postures, it concerns you to be instructed, not only with the exactest Skill, but also with the bravest Courage : And from whence you are to derive this, I think, hath been sufficiently demonstrated, even from Righteousness and universal Goodness.

Wherefore let me beseech you, as ye are Men, and Christians, and Soldiers, to betake your selves to the Study and Practice of this comprehensive Duty, in which all Virtue and Religion is included, to purge your Consciences from dead Works, and discharge your selves of all those Pollutions of the Flesh and Spirit which do so naturally disarm your Courage, and overspread your Minds with Baseness and Pusillanimity ; and to exercise your selves in all that Piety and Devotion towards God, Loyalty and Obedience towards your Prince, Justice and Charity towards one another, Temperance and Sobriety towards your selves, to which Religion and right Reason, the Frame of your Natures, and your Circumstances and Relations oblige you ; by the constant Practice of which, you will acquire such a Noble and Useful Courage, as will render you a Life-Guard to your Prince, a Wall and Bulwark to your Country, and make your famous Artillery-Ground a Sanctuary to your City : For the Courage which springs out of Righteousness, is such as verifies your own *Motto, Arma pacis fulcra*, as props up the Temple of Peace, and preserves it from being violated and prophaned by the sacrilegious Rudeness of those that are given to change : For it consists not in an Unruly Warmth, or Headstrong Violence of Temper, in an Unbridled Fierceness, or Factious Impatience of Government ; but is calm, and well managed, and easily commanded ; so gentle, that it neither throws, nor runs away with its Rider ; and yet so well mettled too, that it never tires under him : For if you be courageous from a Principle of Righteousness, you will honour the King, as well as fear God, and obey his Ordinances for God's sake : You will never conduct a Rebellious Design, under the Sacred Banner of Religion, nor pretend Loyalty to God, to colour your Disloyalty to his Vicegerent ; you will never press the Scriptures to fight against the King, nor arm his Political a-

gainst his Personal Capacity, nor assume his Authority to cut off his Head: Nor, on the other hand, will you ever allow him to be unking'd by the Sentence of a domineering Prelate, and plead that for your Warrant to depose and murder him; you will never yield, that a Papal Bull hath Right to countermand the Twelfth of the *Romans*, and dispense with a Subject's Allegiance to his Prince, in despite of *Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers*: In a Word, you will never confront those Loyal Admonitions of *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*, with the Treasonous Canons of the Councils of the Ungodly; nor levy Arms against your Prince, upon that counterfeit Commission of his being pronounced a Heretick by a Congregation of Impostors.

No, no, if you sincerely study and practise the Rules of Righteousness, you will be too wise, and too honest, to be choused and imposed upon by the transparent Sophistries of those Hypocrites, of whatsoever Denomination, who would fain fetch Pretences for their Treasons and Rebellions, from the most Loyal and Peaceable Religion that ever was. And being thus animated with the Courage of Righteous Men, if ever your King and Country should need your Assistance against Foreign or Domestick Enemies, which God forbid, you will be bravely qualified to be their Champions; and in being so, may promise your selves Honour and Victory here, and an everlasting Triumph hereafter: Which God of his infinite Mercy grant. *To whom be Honour, and Glory, and Power, &c.*

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SERMON IV.

Preach'd before

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor
and Court of Aldermen, at *Guild-Hall*
Chapel, *December 16, 1683.*

PROV. 24. 21.

And meddle not with those that are given to Change.

I Shall not trouble you with the various Acceptations of the *Hebrew* Word *Schonim*, which the *Chaldee* render *Fools*, or, as we say, *Changelings*; and which our Translators, more suitably to what goes before, render, *Those that are given to Change*: For in the former Part of the Text, he advises his Son to *fear the Lord, and honour the King*; that is, to reverence and obey the Supreme Lord and Governour of the World, and in Reverence to him, to be Dutiful and Obedient to the King, who is his immediate *Viceroy*, and Representative upon Earth, and upon that Account ought to be Honoured and Obeyed: And therefore, My Son (says he) as thou wouldest be secur'd from all Disloyalty and Disobedience to thy King, in contemning whose Authority, thou openly affrontest the Supreme Lord of the World, whose invisible Majesty he personates, *Meddle not with those that are given to Change*, *i. e.* who either out of a swelling Ambition of being uppermost, or a private Revenge against their Superiours, or a restless Peevishness and Impatience of Rule, or Affectation of Novelty, or Design to repair their broken Fortunes out of the publick Ruins, are for introducing Changes and Alterations in the Government. With such as these do not mingle thy self, not so much as to listen to their Insinuations, or to credit or propagate their Reports, or to support and countenance their Cause, either with thy Tongue or Pen, or Money, or Suffrage, or to be any other Way aiding or assisting to their Factionous and Seditious Designs.

In the Prosecution of this Argument, I shall endeavour, First, to represent to you, the great Folly and Danger of engaging with such as are given to Change; that is, with Parties and Factions against the Government. And Secondly, to give you the proper Marks and Characters of such Parties and Factions, by which all well-minded Men may know them, and avoid intermeddling with them.

First, I shall endeavour to represent the great Folly and Danger, of engaging with Factions against the Government; of which I shall give you these Five Instances:

First, It exposes our Understanding to the most Erroneous Prejudices and Misrepresentations of things.

Secondly, It exposes our Will to the Blackest and most Diabolical Affections.

Thirdly, It tempts us to an high Neglect of, and Indifferency in the greatest and most necessary things of Religion.

Fourthly, It involves us in the most indirect Courses, and then trains us on, from bad to worse.

Fifthly, It ordinarily snares and entangles us in the greatest Temporal Mischiefs and Calamities.

First, Our engaging with Factions against the Government, exposes our Understanding to the most erroneous Prejudice: For it is the constant Method of Factions, to prejudice the Minds of the People with false and spiteful Glosses upon the Actions of their Superiours, with scandalous Forgeries, or foul Misconstructions of their fairest Meanings, and most honourable Designs; without which base Arts it would be impossible for them to disaffect the Vulgar to any tolerable Government, or to alarm their Passions, and Fears, and Jealousies, which are the usual Train by which they give Fire to all publick Disorder and Confusion. When therefore a Man engages in a Faction, he doth in effect prostitute his Understanding to all the Cheats and Delusions that busie and contriving Knaves can impose on it: For having once wedded his Affections to the Interest of the Faction, they will quickly bribe his Understanding into a Belief of every thing that favours it: And let the Opinion or the Story be never so improbable, it will find an easie Access to such Minds, as are already sed by their Affections to entertain it; and provided it be but serviceable to the Party he is engaged in, that will prevail with his Understanding, against a thousand good Reasons to the contrary: Let him but hear his Prince reproach'd with never such wild and improbable Stories, he shakes his Head, and swallows all for Gospel. Tell him, that the King is deeply engaged in a Plot against his own Life, and Crown, and Dignity; alas, what a dismal Story is this, that a Man should thus fall out with himself, and dote upon his own Ruin! But though his Faith thus glibly swallows Camels on one side, yet 'tis strange to see how it will strain at a Gnat on t'other: For tell him, on t'other side, with never so much Evidence and Demonstration, that the Traiterous Design he talks of, is hatching under the Wings of his own Faction; and though you shew him the very Association, and Band of the bloody Conspiracy, upon the Principles whereof they have murder'd one King already, and so may reasonably be presumed to be acting the Tragedy of another, especially when they act the same things over again, Scene after Scene, so exactly in the same Garb, and Plot, and Language, that had one who died forty Years ago, arose from his Grave but two or three Years since, he would doubtless have concluded, that Forty Two was not yet expired; yea, though you produce a fresh Conspiracy, proved upon the Party by undeniable Evidence, and even by the free Confessions of the dying Conspirators themselves; yet 'tis next to impossible to persuade him, that ever such wise Men should be so mad, or such good Men so wicked, as to engage in such a desperate Villainy. But I need not tell you, who have seen the Transactions of these last Six Years, how many fulsome Lies have been confidently believ'd, and notorious Truths dash'd out of Countenance, through blind Partiality to a Faction. And indeed, when once a Man is engaged in a Faction, 'tis thenceforth impossible for him to judge impartially of things; because now his Faith must see through his Affections, and his Affections must follow the Interest of his Party; and if that be engaged in ill Designs, it will need ill Principles to countenance it; and his Affections being pre-engaged to the Interest of the Faction, will easily bribe his Understanding to assent to any Principles that are needful to support it. Wherefore, if you have any Reverence for your own Understandings, if you would not be play'd upon by Impostures and Deceivers, and chous'd, and abus'd, and led by the Nose through all the wild Mazes of Folly and Fallhood, *Meddle not with those that are given to Change.* *Second.*

Secondly, By engaging our selves in Factions against the Government, we shall, in all probability, insensibly contract the most black and diabolical Affections : For this is the natural Process of all Faction ; it begins in Pride and Self-conceit, in an arrogant Presumption that we are much wiser than those above us, and fitter to rule and govern ; and then having once entertain'd this over-weening Opinion of our selves, we look upon all that are superiour to us, with Envious and Malignant Eyes, and think our selves highly injured and affronted, that we are not plac'd at the upper End of the World ; and then, from Envy, we proceed to Hating our Governours, and from Hating them, to Impatience of their Government : To ease our selves of which, we soon imbody into Factions, where we whet our Malice and Arrogance upon one another, by applauding each other in censuring those above, in running spiteful Descants on their Actions, and Arraigning their Mal-Administration at the Tribunal of our Majesty ; than which there is nothing can more effectually humour and gratifie our Vanity : For what a glorious thing is it for a little Shop-keeper or Mechanick to perk up a mighty Politician, and sit in Judgment on his Governours, to expose the Folly of their Conduct, and find out the soft Places of their Ministers of State ? How much greater and more magnificent is this, than to be dull, and stay at home, and mind ones own Business ? And when by thus humouring our Pride, we have blown it up into Insolence, this swells our Envy, and that inflames our Malice against all that are above us, or opposite to us : For by this time our Mind is so bloated, that we cannot bear the least Contradiction ; but are ready to run down with Clamour, and hard Names, every thing that thwarts our imperious Dictates ; and in Matters of Religion, every thing is Popery that agrees not with the Model of our Reformation ; and in Matters of State, every thing Tyranny, that opposes the Platform of our Government : And unless all things be framed according to our Humour, and bend to the Dictates of our oraculous Pride, Heaven and Earth will come together, the Gospel, and Liberty and Property will vanish, and the whole Frame of things sink into Confusion. And while we thus make our Pride and Self-conceit the Standard of the World, and expect that all things should comply with, and truckle to it ; we shall be so impatient of Contradiction, that 'twill be little better than Treason or Blasphemy to oppose us : So that whosoever presumes to give Check to our Insolence, is sure to be made the Mark of our Malice, and to be persecuted with all the Reproach and *Opprobrium* that the most inveterate Rancour can invent. Thus Faction, you see, is impregnated with the very Nature of the Devil ; and carries in it all the Pride and Envy, Rancour and Malice, that sunk down the Angels of Light from Heaven, and converted them into Fiends and Furies. Wherefore, as you would not expose your Natures to Spoil and Ravage, to be overspread with the most poisonous Affections, and drowned in the Passions of Hell, *Meddle not with those that are given to Change.*

Thirdly, By engaging our selves in Factions against the Government, we shall be mightily tempted to neglect the great and necessary Things of Religion : For generally, the Foundations of all Factions against Government are laid in little Disputes about Matters of Religion ; which are usually started by the Leaders of the Faction, for no other End, but to engage the honest Zeal of the People against the Establish'd Religion, that thereby they may engage them against the Establish'd Government. And could they but make them as zealous for the Mass, as for the *Directory*, 'twould be all one to them, which of the Two they advanc'd against the Publick Establishment ; their Design in these hot Disputes about Religion, being only to lay a Train to blow up the Government : And since the Zeal of the People is the Tool they must work with, it is their Interest to sharpen it, and render it as Keen and Active as may be : So that when once you have engaged your selves in their Faction, to be sure they will employ their utmost Endeavours to bigot your Minds to their Opinion, and to engage all your Zeal for the little Modes and Circumstances they contend for ; they will so represent the Matter to you, as if the Life and Substance of Religion were

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in Dispute ; as if God, and Jesus Christ, and the Gospel, were all at Stake upon the Controversie, and your Souls were to sink or swim with their Opinions : And your Zeal being engaged by these Arts, for the trifling Opinions of your Party, you will by Degrees, grow remiss, and neglective of the great and weighty Things of Religion : For the Mind of Man being finite in all its Acts, can never operate divers Ways at once, with equal Force and Vigour ; but whatsoever Time and Attention we bestow upon one thing, we must necessarily subtract from another ; and so by degrees, as we grow more and more Zealous for the little Modes and Opinions of our Party, we shall grow more and more remiss in the main and necessary Duties of Religion, till at last we degenerate into perfect Lukewarmness : And accordingly, how many are there among our selves, the very Spirit of whose Religion is evaporated into a noise, busie and blustering Zeal for Parties, who are wondrous Nice and Scrupulous about the Rites and Ceremonies of Religion ; and yet can swallow Lies, Perjuries, Treasons and Rebellions without the least straining or Remorse ? O, did but these Men love God and their Neighbours, in the same Proportion as they do a Conventicle ! Did they but hate Impiety and Immorality, but half so much as they do Bishops, and Liturgies, what excellent Christians would they be ? But alas, their Zeal is swallowed up in their Faction ; the Current is diverted out of those proper Channels of Piety and Virtue, into the little Wranglings of their Party, where it flows Headlong, and makes a clamorous noise, to no other Purpose but to disturb the World. Wherefore, as you would not be tempted into a gross Neglect of the Substantials of Religion, to convert your Piety and Virtue, into Bigotry and stickling for Parties, *Meddle not with those that are given to Change.*

Fourthly, By engaging our selves in Factions against the Government, we shall, in all Probability, insensibly involve our selves in indirect Courses, and be train'd on from one Evil to another, in the most flagitious Villainies. When first Men list themselves into Parties, their Designs perhaps, are fair and innocent : They are told, that their Religion, their Liberties, and Properties are in Danger ; and finding such a Party of Men set up for forward and zealous Assertors of them, they mingle with them, with no other Intent, but to concur with them in all honest and lawful Endeavours, to preserve and secure those invaluable Blessings. But alas, poor Souls ! they see where they begin, but God knows where they will end : For now they must move by the Measures of the Faction, and see with its Eyes, and hear with its Ears ; through which, to be sure, all the Actions and Designs of their Governours, will be represented to them in the blackest Colours : By which their Passions being enflamed with Contempt and Hatred of them, will soon blaze out at their Mouth, or Pens, into seditious Talk or factious Libels ; and then such is the Nature of Contempt and Hatred, that the very venting of them, fans and irritates them, till at last they settle into inveterate Rancour, and then they are capable of any Mischief : For all along as their Passion is growing, they mistake it for a pious Zeal for God, and Religion, and the publick Good ; and under that Notion, cherish its Regular Transports ; concluding, that nothing can be amiss, that proceeds from such a sanctified Principle : And so, though they lie, and slander, and backbite, and perjure themselves over and over, yet 'tis all well ; because they do it out of Zeal for the Glory of God, and the true Protestant Religion : For when once intemperate Zeal gets a-head, it bears down all Considerations of Reason and Religion before it, and hurries it on into the foulest Enormities ; and then, when once our outrageous Zeal hath transported us into illegal and unjustifiable Actions, we shall many times be tempted to proceed, through mere Despair of a safe Retreat, to shelter our selves from the Punishment of one Crime, by committing another : For so in all Factions, Men do commonly so involve themselves, that when they have done ill, they have no other way to save themselves, but by doing worse. Thus, when by their Seditious Behaviour, they have incensed their Governour against them, it's necessary for them to associate ; and when they are associated, it's necessary to rebel ; and when they have drawn the Sword, it's necessary to fling the Scabbard to the Devil : For I make no doubt, but many
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of those Wretches that murdered the late King, would have trembled at the Thought of it when they first engaged in the Faction ; but their Zeal having once transported them into Sedition, they had no other way to escape, but by Rebellion ; and being engaged in Rebellion, they had no other Sanctuary, but Regicide. As therefore you would not expose your Innocence and Virtue to these, and such like dangerous Temptations, *Mingle not with such as are given to Change.*

Fifthly, and Lastly, By engaging with Factions against the Government, we shall, in all Probability, intangle our selves in the greatest Temporal Mischiefs and Calamities : For Faction is naturally forward and pragmatical ; it fills Mens Heads with Projects and *Chimera's*, with Mysteries of State, and Models of Government, and sends their Thoughts after the Fools Eyes, roving to the Ends of the Earth, to Parliaments and Privy Counsels, and high Consultations about Affairs of Government. And when once their Minds are got abroad, their Bodies cannot stay long behind ; but away they must to some Coffee-House, or Publick Refectory, to vent their Politicks, and advise about Affairs of State, discharge their Consciences to the Publick, by directing how things ought to be managed, and shewing where the Ministers of State are out, and by what Measures they ought to steer the Helm of Government ; and in the mean time, while they are governing abroad, the Shop is neglected at Home, and the Trade decays, and they and their Families sink insensibly into Beggary : For though, for a very small Charge, they may sit and govern an Hour or two together, yet hereby their Time is not only wasted, which is much more precious than their Money ; but their Heads are filled with so many Politick Whimsies, that when they come Home, they cannot mind their Business ; their Shops are grown too little for their Minds, and they can neither think, nor talk beneath Affairs of Empire : And when once Men are got into this Vein, 'tis time for their Creditors, as well as their Governours, to look after them : For 'tis too too much for one Man to govern a Kingdom, and to mind a Trade ; while he is busie Abroad, he must be Idle at Home ; and when his Faction hath reduced him to Idleness, his Idleness will soon bring him to Beggary ; of the Truth of which the Age we live in, affords us too many woful Instances, of such as have been thrust on by a factious and pragmatical Temper, to intermeddle with Affairs of Government ; which, by Degrees, have so ingross'd their Thoughts, and Cares, and Time, and Activity, that they could scarce ever be at Leisure to attend their own Business ; and so, like the foolish Astronomer, whilst they have been gazing at the Stars, and troubling their Heads about Affairs above them, they have been utterly regardless of their own Concerns, and tumbled into a Ditch of Ruin unawares. But suppose they escape this Rock ; yet there is another very dangerous one attends them ; and that is, the Law, against which, in all Probability, they will one time or other split themselves in Pieces : For Faction naturally renders Men bold and confident of their own Understanding ; so that if they have but attain'd some little smattering of Law, they make no Doubt, but that they fully understand it, and the utmost Bounds of it, and how far they may venture without incurring its Penalties ; and so many times they dance themselves into a Noose, and, like silly Flies, play about the Candle, till they have sing'd their Wings in the Flame of it. For when, out of an ignorant Confidence, Men will venture as far as they imagine they may, 'tis a thousand to one but they venture farther than they should, and either prate or scribble within the Reach of a Penalty ; or, through their own inconsiderate Rashness, are insensibly decoy'd into seditious and treasonous Conspiracies ; where notwithstanding all Engagements of Secrecy, and Hopes of future Advancement, their Lives and Fortunes are at Pawn in the Hands of their Fellow-Conspirators ; who being prompted, either by Drunkenness, or Vanity, or Fear, or Conscience, will, in all Probability, one time or other betray them ; or, if they do not, yet their Cabals may be observed and suspected, their Councils may be over-heard, or their own Guilty Looks, or Affectation of Secrecy, may discover them, and a thousand other Accidents may unfold their dark Intrigues, and conclude their mighty Hopes in a Halter. And, considering that there is an All-seeing Providence that super-intends the Affairs of the World, and
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hath a peculiar Regard to the Safety of Princes, it is ten thousand to one against them, but that one time or other, they are catcht in their own Snares : For so it follows immediately after my Text, *For their Calamity shall rise suddenly, and who knows the Ruin of them both?* That is, both of those that move the Rebellion, and of those that associate with them?

I now proceed to the Second thing propos'd ; which is, to give you some Signs and Tokens, by which you may distinguish *such as are given to Change*, in Order to your avoiding them.

One would think indeed, considering our Circumstances, it should be needless to warn us of engaging in Factions against our Government ; which is not only in it self the most gentle and easie in the World ; but also administred with an unparalleled Lenity and Goodness, by a most gracious and merciful Prince ; a Prince that hath been endear'd to us by most signal Favours from Heaven, by so many Wonders of Providence, and strange repeated Deliverances, and under whose Gracious Influence and Protection we have hitherto sat quietly under our own Vines, whilst all the Nations round about, have been involv'd in Blood and Confusion : So that for us to list our selves in a Faction against him, who hath been the Author of so much Happiness to us, and this after so many Repulses of Divine Providence, which hath so manifestly stood by him, and own'd him for its Darling and Favourite, would be to fight not only against our selves, and our own Happiness, not only against God's express Will, and visible Authority ; but against his bare and naked Arm too. Notwithstanding all which, it's too too visible, how apt we are to be impress'd and wrought upon by the seditious Arts and Insinuations of Evil-minded Men : Wherefore, in such an Age as this, wherein even well-meaning Men are so often practis'd on, and their honest Zeal is apt to be abused, and ridden by a Company of Mal-contents ; it must doubtless be very seasonable to give some Signs and Tokens to the World, by which those that are given to Change, may be known, and discover'd, and avoided. Of these therefore, I shall give you the following Particulars :

First, When Men who have actually changed the Government already, begin to re-advance their old Principles, Methods and Pretences, it's a certain Sign, they are given to Change : For either they have repented their Subversion of the Government, or they have not : If they have, the Fruits of it will Appear in their future Behaviour ; they will be more Peaceable, and Modest, and Obedient for the time to come, and keep a greater Distance from those seditious Arts, by which they were inveigled, or did inveigle others, into the past Rebellion. But if they have not repented, and do still continue of the same Mind, advancing their old Principles and Pretences ; you may be sure, they are aiming at their old Mark ; and 'twould not be Charity, but Sottishness, to believe, the Gamester who rookt you once before, doth not design the same again, when you see him throw the same false Dice. When therefore you hear the Cry of Popery, and Arbitrary Government renewed by a Party that have once blown up the Throne with it already, you may conclude upon it, that they are playing the old Game over again. For whatsoever Cause there be to dread Popery or Tyranny, these, of all Men, were they truly Penitent for what is past, would be the most cautious how they alarm'd Mens Fears and Jealousies again, considering what horrid Mischiefs they did by their false Alarms heretofore. When therefore you see them forward and industrious, and raise to propagate their old Clamour afresh, you may without Breach of Charity, conclude, that they are the same Men they were, and are driving at the same Design.

Secondly, When Men make that a Pretence for publick Clamour and Bustle, which themselves have little or no Claim to, or Regard for, it's a certain Sign they are given to Change : For 'tis not to be imagin'd, that Men should be heartily concern'd for those things wherein they have no Share or Interest. Should you hear two Persons earnestly contending about the Division of the Lands in the World in the Moon, you would hardly believe they were in Earnest ; because whether there be Lands there, or no, you are sure these Men can have no Interest in them ;
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and therefore you must either conclude, that they are mad, or, that whatever they pretend, the Foundation of their Quarrel lies below the Moon. Thus, for Instance, when you hear a Company of profligate Debauchees, that live in open Defiance to all Religion, raise a Clamour for *Religion*, in which they are no more interested or concerned, than in those Up-Land Countries in the World of the Moon; you may be sure, the real Cause of their Clamour is something, in which they are more nearly concerned, and that this Pretence of Religion is only a plausible Mask of their Covetousness, or Revenge, or Ambition. And so again, when you hear a Company of Bankrupts, or Stript Sequestrators, raise a Cry for *Freehold* and *Property*, against the Government, you may depend upon it, that this is not the real Mark they aim at: For what should make these Men so zealous for *Property*, that have nothing of their own to lose? It's a plain Case therefore, that they love your Properties so well, that they would fain have a Share in them; and in order thereunto, they would raise a Storm upon the Government, that so in a common Wreck they may enrich themselves with the Division of the Spoil, and wrest their old Usurpations out of the Hand of the Rightful Possessors. Wherefore, while you live, have care of intermingling your selves with *Atheists* and *Beggars*, in their Contentions with the Government for *Liberty* and *Property*.

Thirdly, When Men pretend *Religion*, or *Publick Reformation*, but pursue it by indirect Means, 'tis a certain Token that they are given to Change: For they who heartily espouse the Interest of *Religion*, are Enemies to all things that *Religion* is an Enemy to: And therefore, if I hate the Corruptions of *Religion*, for *Religion's* sake, I must hate all sinful Ways of Reforming it; because those sinful Ways are as contrary to *Religion*, as the Corruptions I would reform by them. As for Example; *Religion* is as great an Enemy to Lying and Rebellion, as it is to Popery; and therefore, if I truly love *Religion*, I shall be as great an Enemy to one as the other. Wherefore, if I see Men attempt to reform *Religion* from Popery by Lying or Rebellion, I am sure, 'tis not to serve *Religion* that they do it, but to serve themselves, by unhinging the Government: For had they the sincere Zeal to *Religion* they pretend to, they would be as forward to obey its Commands of speaking the Truth, and submitting to their Governours, as they are to comply with its Prohibitions of Worshipping Images and Consecrated Wafers; because its Authority is equally concerned in both: And besides, they would consider, that by using unwarrantable Means to purge and defend it, they shall much more prejudice its Cause, than the best Reformation can promote it: And consequently, that it is much more for the true Interest of *Religion*, to be persecuted by Popery, than to be reformed by Rebellion. Whereas by using Wicked Arts to defend it, they only rescue it from one Enemy, to betray it to another; and to vindicate its Honour from Superstition and Idolatry, sacrifice it to Rebellion and Murder. When therefore you find any Party of Men driving on a Pretence of *Religion* or *Reformation*, with Lies and Perjuries, Backbiting and Slanders, Tumults and Insurrections; as you tender, either your Virtue or Welfare, have nothing to do with them: For you will most certainly find a *Faction* of Hypocrites, that only make a Shew of reforming *Religion*, to undermine the Government.

Fourthly, When under a Pretence of reforming the Government, Men reproach and vilifie the Persons of their Governours; and are forward to believe Ill, and backward to believe Well of them, it's a certain Sign that they are given to Change: For if they design no more than the Reformation of some Faults, or Errours in the Government, they would only apply themselves to those in whose Power it is to correct them; and with all Humility, endeavour to convince them of, and persuade them to rectifie them. But to make it our business to speak ill of them, where they cannot hear us, and proclaim and magnifie their Faults in our common Conversation; what other End can this serve, but, First, to arm the Passions, and then the Hands of the People against them? To what purpose should you tell me a Tragical Story, of the ill Actions or Designs of

my Prince? You know very well, I am neither his Tutor nor his Counsellor, and so no way capable to correct or reform him. All that you can effect therefore, is, to raise an ill Opinion of him in my Mind; and what other Influence can my ill Opinion have, but to prepare me to list my self in any mischievous Design against him? When therefore you find Men addicted to whisper, or proclaim the Faults of their Governours, to magnifie their Faults, and conceal or lessen their good Conduct and Success; you may depend upon it, that their Designs are mischievous, that they rejoyce in the Faults they exclaim against, and are glad things are so bad, and do heartily wish they were worse, that so they might exclaim against them with the better Grace and Countenance; that they lament nothing so much, as the wise and good Deeds of their Governours; and that the worst News they can hear, is, the Prosperity of the Publick, under the happy Influence of their Government: For how can I delight to imblazon the Faults I am sorry for, and do wish were amended? How can I take pleasure in making them worse than they are, did I not wish they were so? Why should I be so forward to believe any ill of them, but that *facile credimus quod volumus*? Why so backward to believe any Good, but that we heartily wish there were no Cause for it? Wherever therefore, you find any Persons of this Character, avoid them as you would the Air of a Pest House: For assure your selves, whatever they pretend, 'tis not *Reformation* of the Government they aim at, but the *Destruction* of the Governours.

Fifthly, When Men shift their Principles with their Interest, and to serve a Turn, can comply at one time, with that which they condemn at another, it's a sure Sign they are *given to Change*: For if Conscience be the Motive of our Non-compliance with the Government, those Reasons which sway us, when it is for our Interest, will as well sway us when it is against it; because our Conscience is nothing but the Reason of our Mind directing us what to do, and what to avoid: And though outward Changes may alter our Interest, yet 'tis only better Reason that can alter our Reason; and whether it be better, or no, is not to be determin'd by mutable Interests, but by Scripture, or the immutable Natures of Things. When therefore you see any Party of Men, that dissent from the Government, shift their Principles and Practices, according to their variable Exigencies of their Affairs, conform to day, and non-conform to morrow, go to Church and receive the Sacrament to avoid a Penalty, or qualifie themselves for an Office, and when that Turn is served, revolt to a Conventicle, and pretend Conscience against our Worship and Ceremonies: When you hear them curse Toleration, whilst themselves are in the Saddle; and as soon as they are dismounted, declaim for Liberty of Conscience, cry up the Prerogatives of the Crown, while it indulges, and cry them down again, as soon as it restrains them: In a Word, when you hear them bitterly exclaiming against Equivocation, Rebellion, and Treason in a *Papist*, and yet practise it themselves upon *Papist Principles*, when their own Cause and Interest invites them: When, I say, you see these, or any such like Shiftings and Doublings in any Party dissenting from the Government, you may certainly conclude, that 'tis not their Conscience sways, but their Faction.

Sixthly and Lastly, When Men, who in the ordinary Course of their Conversation, are proud and quarrelsome, and impatient of Contradiction, set up Pretences of Religion against the Government, 'tis a certain Sign that they are *given to Change*: For a great part of that which Men call *Religion*, is nothing but the Workings of their natural Temper into such Principles and Practices, as are most sutable to it. Thus, the *Pharisees*, for instance, were Men of a very haughty, sour, pragmatistical and untractable Nature; and this Temper of theirs wrought it self by degrees into a sutable Religion: For so their Pride issu'd into Affectation of Singularity, and that into those distinguishing Garbs, and Rites, and Gestures, which were the Badges of their Faction: So their Austerity and Sournels discharg'd it self in long Prayers, frequent Fasts, and unnecessary Severities; and that into an uncharitable Opinion of every one that pray'd not as long,

long, and fasted not as often as they ; and this into a fallen Separation from their Neighbours, both in Civil and Sacred Society : And in a Word, to their Surliness and untractable Humour, work'd out into a factious Scrupulosity about Matters of Civil Obedience, and that into Seditions, and sometimes open Rebellions, upon slight and trifling Occasions : And when, upon such Principles, as were most agreeable to their own ill Nature, they had form'd themselves into a Sect, all the ill-natur'd People, both in Town and Country, were easily converted to it ; and some good People too, perhaps, were so far imposed on by the mighty Shew it made, of Zeal and Sanctity, as to imbody with it ; the Candor of their Natures not permitting them to suspect a rotten Core under so fair an Out-side ; till at length being poyson'd themselves by the ill Principles of the Party, they became as ill-natur'd as the rest of their Brethren ; and so as ill Nature begot the ill Principles in some, so the ill Principles begot ill Nature in others. So that though his *Pharisaical Religion* made a mighty Shew, and look'd with a most demure and sanctifi'd Countenance ; yet 'tis plain, that the only Foundation of it was Baseness and ill Nature ; and since thus it hath been, thus it may be again : For in all Dissenting Religions, such as the *Pharisees* was, there is something very grateful to proud and untractable Natures.

'Tis a mighty Gratification to our Pride to dissent, and be singular in our Opinion and Practices, because it looks as if we were wiser than the rest of the World ; it wonderfully tickles a cross-grain'd surly Nature, to be opposite in Opinion to that which is uppermost : And therefore, before you side with any Party that advances a Pretence of *Religion* against the Government, it concerns you strictly to observe, whether in their ordinary Conversation they were modest and gentle, humble and easie to be entreated ; and if so, you may justly conclude, that their *Religion*, whether it be true or false, is founded in their Reason and Conscience. But if on the contrary, you perceive in them a fierce, proud, froward, and Inflexible Nature ; if in their ordinary Converses, they are cross and unsociable ; if they affect Contention in the Neighbourhoods and Societies wherein they are engaged, and are hot and impatient of Contradiction ; you may, without Breach of Charity, conclude, that their Dissent proceeds not so much from the Convictions of their Reason, as from the Pride and Crossness of their Humour. And therefore, wherever you find such as these contending with the Government ; as you would not be made the Tools of their Perverseness, stand off, and have nothing to do with them : For when Men have the Seeds of Sedition in their Natures, they are thereby inclined to entertain Dissents from the *Established Religion*, merely because those Dissents are opposite to the Government ; and though, if the Principles of their Dissent are ill, they will the more inflame their ill Nature against the Government ; yet their ill Nature which tempted them to espouse those Principles, would have rendred them untractable to the Government, whether they had espoused them or no. And thus, with all Plainness and Integrity, I have endeavour'd to characterize those that are *given to Change*, that so honest Men may know them when they see them, and avoid them : And if herein I have reflected upon any ill Men, or ill Party of Men ; it was with no other Design, but to warn others from intermingling with them : And surely, to admonish Men of a Danger that threatens Ruin both to their Souls and Bodies, and shew them the way to Peace, Security, and Happiness, is such a friendly Office as can give Offence to none, but such as are resolv'd never to be honest or wiser. I confess, of all the Offices that belong to a Preacher, I am naturally the most averse to that of Reprehension ; I do not love to expose Mens Faults, to probe and rake into their Sores ; and 'tis not only my Charity to Mankind, but the Indisposition of my Nature to find Fault, that makes me wish, that all Men were so good, as to need no Reprehension, that so we might have nothing to do, but to praise and encourage them, to excite them to go on with the Comforts of *Religion*, and the Just Applauses of well doing. But alas, we live in an Age would make a Stone speak, and force any honest Man, in despite of all the Candor and Modesty of his Nature, to cry aloud against the tinsome Hypocrisies and Impositions that look thro' our most glorious Pretences to *Religion* : For what

a nauseous Shame is it, to see Men set up for Reformers, and disturb a wise and excellent Establishment, with endless Scruples about Indifferent Things; whose Consciences, as they call 'em, are as tender as their Eyes on one side, and yet as hard as their Foreheads on the other; cannot indure the Weight of an innocent Ceremony when their Obedience is required; and yet to serve the Interest of a Faction, can dance under Loads of Perjury and Treason? And yet, God help us, such as these have been the Captains of all our Factions against the Government; Men of ill Lives and Atheistical Principles, that pretend to *Grace* without *Morality*, and to *Religion* without believing in God; and yet make a mighty Noise against the Government, for *true Religion*, *pure Ordinances*, and a *thorough Reformation*; and therewithal have drawn in our discontented Sects into their Party, and lifted them Volunteers to their Revenge and Ambition. And indeed, while Men live in Dissent from the *Established Religion*, it is impossible but their Minds should be in some Measure prejudiced against the Government; especially, if they are restrain'd from propagating their Dissents, as they must expect to be under all wise Governments: For, to be sure, this Restriction will be accounted by them an injurious Persecution, and 'twill be hard for them to refrain hating their Governours, whilst they look upon them as their Persecutors; and when once their Passions are arm'd against the Government, they are half way onwards to an open Rebellion: And 'twill be an easie Matter for any cashier'd *Grandee*, or politick *Demagogue*, that has but Wit enough to chase their Discontents, and Credit enough to head their Cause, to form them into a Resolute Faction against the Government: So that it will be impossible, either for the Government to be safe, or for us to be secure from the Mischiefs of Faction, whilst we affect to dissent from the Establish'd Religion. And therefore it concerns every Dissenter, as he values his own Safety and Innocence, to use all honest Ways to satisfy his Conscience in the Communion of the Establish'd Church; where he will not only be secur'd from those Disaffections to the Government, which he is liable to, whilst he continues in any discountenanc'd Sect; but also instituted in such firm Principles of Loyalty, as, if he follows, will for ever secure him from engaging in Factions: For this is the Doctrine of our Church express'd in the Homily of Obedience, *We may not in any wise withstand violently, or rebel against the Rulers, or make any Insurrection, Sedition, or Tumult, either by Force of Arms, or otherwise, against the Anointed of the Lord, or any of his Officers: But we must in such case (that is, when we are commanded unlawful things) patiently suffer all Wrongs and Injuries, referring the Judgment of our Case to God: And in this, as well as in her other Doctrines, her Government and Discipline, our Church doth exactly copy after the Primitive Christianity: If therefore we believe this Doctrine, our Consciences will never consent to our listing our selves against the Government; but if instead of believing it, we openly contradict and oppose it, as all those do, who pretend Religion for their Faction, we are so far Dissenters from the Church of England: For Conformity to a Church consists not merely in frequenting its Prayers, and Sermons, and Sacraments, and complying with its Rites and Discipline; but also in believing its Doctrines, or at least, not openly opposing and contradicting them: But whosoever sides with a Faction against the Government, upon pretence of Religion, doth thereby openly Renounce the Doctrine of our Church, and becomes a confessed *Non-conformist*, how conformable soever he may be in other Particulars. So that tho' there are too many Men, who, to credit their ill Designs against the Government, shelter themselves under the Wings of the Church; yet it's evident, they are either *Non-conformists* to the Church, or *Conformists* that act against their own Principle; which is such a Fault, as no Church can prevent, so long as there is such a thing as Free Will in the World: Wherefore, as you would preserve your selves from those manifold Mischiefs that Faction draws after it, do not found your Loyalty upon Humour, or Fashion, or Interest, which are fickle and variable things; but upon the Religious Principles of the Church, whereof you are Members; which will keep us stedfast, and immovable, amidst all the Mutabilities of the World: For whilst you have no Principles*

ciples to lead you, and you reserve your selves to follow Fortune, and the Turns of outward Affairs; you will be shifting your selves upon every Change, and in a very unscriptural Sense, *putting off the Old Man, and putting on the New*. And whilst you thus transform your selves into a thousand several Shapes, as you run through the still changing Fashions of the World; besides that, it will expose you of all sides to the odious Character of Turn-coats and Renegadoes, that are constant to nothing, and to the Bosom Satyrs and secret Upbraidings of your own Consciences: Besides this, I say, it will eternally perplex and entangle your Lives. For upon every new Alteration of Affairs, you must act a new Part, and put on a new Garb of Conversation: And whilst you thus shift Sides upon every Turn, new shape your Humours, and jump from one Extreme to another, you will be always doing Violence to your Natures, because you will act no Part long enough to render any natural and easie to you: So that when all is done, the easiest Way of living, is to live honestly; that is, to set down honest Principles in our Minds, and then resolve to follow them through all Events: So shall we live consistently with our selves; and whatsoever happens from without, be always the same, and in all Conditions still know where to find our selves; because we shall always act upon the same Principles, and so there will be no cross Deliberations in our Minds, no Mazes or Intrigues in our Lives, no By-ways of Actions upon new Emergencies; but whatsoever happen, we shall still be going on through the same Path towards the same End; and whatsoever befalls us from without, whether it Rains or Shines, proves Calm or Tempestuous, we shall never be at a Loss how to behave our selves; but our Principles will still chalk us out the Way we are to walk in: And though in following them, we may sometimes endanger our Worldly Interest, and fall under the Disgrace of a Rabble, and the Persecutions of a prevailing Faction; yet our very Enemies will be forced to revere and honour us, to acknowledge that we are constant and brave, honest and resign'd to our own Principles; and, which is better than that, we shall revere our selves, and be supported under our Sufferings with the Applauses of our Conscience, and the Hopes of a Glorious Immortality; which will render our Condition, not only tolerable in it self, but much more desirable than the Crowns and Triumphs of prosperous Hypocrites: And, which is best of all, God himself will honour us before Angels and Saints, and plead our Cause, and vindicate our Innocence, and reward our Sufferings for Righteousness-sake. Thus, by pursuing the honest Principles of our Religion, we shall be inviolably secur'd against all the Mischiefs of Faction, and immovably confirm'd in our Loyalty, both to God and the King; which, in all Probability, will render our Lives secure and easie in this World; but to be sure, everlastingly happy in the World to come.

SERMON V.

Preach'd before

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor
and Court of Aldermen, at St. Mary
Le Low, July 26, 1685.

2 SAM. 18.28.

And Ahimaaz called and said unto the King, All is well. And he fell down to the Earth upon his Face before the King, and said, Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the Men that lift up their Hand against my Lord the King.

THIS *Ahimaaz* was a Soldier under *Joab*, in the Battle which he fought with *Absalom*, the rebellious Son of his too kind and indulgent Father, King *David*; who having newly pardon'd him that unnatural Murder of his Brother *Amnon*, and receiv'd him into Grace and Favour, and furnish'd him with a plentiful Revenue, and a splendid Equipage; so that if he had pleas'd, he might have lived in Peace and Glory, and been a Comfort to his Father, a Patriot to his Country, and a Blessing to his Family; and after he had finish'd the Circle of a happy and prosperous Life, might have gone down with Honour to his Grave: The foolish ungrateful young Man, being thereto excited, partly perhaps, by the Insinuations of a Company of crafty Malecontents, but chiefly by his own Ambition, imbarques himself in a wicked and desperate Design against his Father's Life and Crown: In order whereunto, he industriously sets himself, by mean and poor Condescensions, to cajole and inveigle the rude and giddy *Mobile*; which, partly by declaiming against the Mal-Administrations of his Father's Government, partly by promising them a thorough Reformation, if ever he arriv'd to be a Judge in *Israel*, he at length accomplish'd. And now, having form'd to himself a strong and numerous Party, he gets his Father's Leave to make a Progress to *Hebron* (a Factionous Town, without doubt, and it lay Westward of *Jerusalem*) under pretence of paying a Vow there; for so Religion is the usual Sham of Rebellion: Where being arriv'd with Two Hundred Men out of *Jerusalem*, who follow'd him blindfold, without either Fear or Wit, he sends for one *Achitophel*, who had been a Counselor to his Father; but at this time, as it seems probable, was discarded the Court for some high Misdemeanour. This canker'd old Wretch, glad of the Opportunity to revenge himself upon his Master, immediately joyns Interests with his undutiful Son, and thereby encreases his Party into a strong and numerous

rous Army, with which he marches against his King and Father, and is overthrown in a pitch'd Battle ; and notwithstanding his Father's Orders to the contrary, is slain by the Hand of *Joab*, who wisely foresaw, that *David* could never hope to reign in Peace, so long as the Rebel *Abfalom* was alive. Hereupon *Abimaaz* the Son of *Zadock*, a valiant Soldier, and swift and nimble Foot-Man, desires *Joab*, his General, that he may be the Messenger of the good Tidings to the King : But *Joab* having a Kindness for the Man, and wisely considering that the News of *Abfalom*'s Death would be very unwelcome to *David*, and in all Probability, transport him into a high Displeasure, and so prove fatal to the Deliverer ; at first refuses to let him go, and in his Room sends *Cushi*, who was either a Common, or a Foreign Soldier ; but *Abimaaz*, upon his importunate Desire, at length obtains of *Joab* Leave to follow him ; and being much the nimbler, outruns *Cushi* ; and being arriv'd into the King's Presence, cries, *All is well*, being unable, either through excess of Joy, or want of Breath, to express his Message at large : After which, having recover'd himself a little, he throws himself at the King's Feet, and in a Transport of Joy and Thanksgiving, thus expresses himself, *Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the Men, that lift up their Hand against my Lord the King.*

In choosing which Words for my Text upon this joyful Occasion, God knows, I have no Design to insult and trample on the Memory of that wofully misled and Unfortunate Gentleman, who was Captain of that late Black Rebellion, the happy Overthrow and Conclusion of which we are now thankfully commemorating. For though it cannot be deny'd, but that his unnatural and undutiful Behaviour to his late most gracious Father and Sovereign, did but too justly entitle him to the Name and Character of *Abfalom* ; and that his Rebellion against, Infidelity to, and barbarous Aspersions of his present Majesty, who was always his generous Patron and Benefactor, do but too deservedly brand him the perfidious and ungrateful *Abfalom* : Yet considering the Relation he bore to our late dear Sovereign of ever blessed Memory, the promising Blossom of his Youth, before it was blasted with wild and boundless Ambition, and the glorious Sphere in which he once mov'd ; where, had he not aspir'd to the Seat of the Sun, he might have shone among Stars of the first Magnitude, and shed forth a benign Influence upon his Country and Family. Considering these things, I say, I am so far from triumphing on his Ruin, that I heartily lament and bewail his being seduc'd into the Crimes that were the Cause of it, and detest those cursed *Achitophels* that seduc'd him, only to make him the Tool of their own dire Revenge and restless Ambition : And, if God so please, may that same Justice that hath reach'd him, lay Hands on them, and by a yet more infamous Punishment, revenge his Sin and Ruin on their Heads. And since his Memory cannot live with Honour, I heartily wish it might die in Oblivion ; that so having paid that Debt which Law, and Justice, and the necessary Reasons of things exacted of him, it might never hereafter be remembred against him, how desperately he broke through all the Ties of Nature, Honour, Gratitude and Religion, to precipitate himself into a shameful and untimely Fate. But this being only a hopeless Wish, I shall, in Pity to his Memory, forbear running the odious Parallel between *Abfalom* and him, through all the black Circumstances of their Sin and Punishment ; having said enough already, and yet no more than what was necessary, to explain the Suitableness of the Text to the Occasion, *Blessed be the Lord thy God who hath delivered up the Men that lift up their Hand against my Lord the King.* In which Words are two things observable.

First, The great Concern and Interest God hath in the Overthrow of Rebels ; It is he that *delivers 'em up*.

Secondly, The great Cause we have to return Thanks to God when he *delivers 'em up*.

I shall begin with the first of these, *viz.* The great Concern and Interest God hath in the Overthrow of Rebels ; It is he who *delivers 'em up*. 'Tis true, the Success of War, on which Side soever it lights, depends upon the divine Providence ;

dence ; which having the Disposal of all Events whether they be adverse or prosperous, turns the Scale of Victory on which Side it pleases : For the second Causes upon which Success and Victory ordinarily depend, is the good Conduct of those who command, and the Strength, and Courage, and Expertness of those who execute ; all which are under the Command and Sovereign Disposal of God ; who, if he pleases, can insatuate the wisest and most skilful Commanders, blindfold their Judgments, confound their Reason, and turn their Wisdom into Folly ; so they shall run quite counter to their own Designs, and blow up themselves with their own Trains ; who, if he doth not insatuate 'em, can yet frustrate their Wisdom, and by a thousand Accidents, which they can neither foresee, nor prevent, baffle and defeat their most prudent and promising Designs ; who, if he pleases, can divide, and break the Strength of the most numerous, dissolve and confound the Order of the most disciplin'd, melt and emasculate the Courage of the most resolute Armies ; and having the sovereign Disposal of all the second Causes of Success in his Hands, 'tis he alone that can decide the Battle, and determine the hovering Victory to which side he pleases ; so that whether it lights on the right or wrong side, on the usurping Rebels, or lawful Prince's Crest, 'tis by his all-disposing Direction and Appointment : For though *the Horse is prepared for Battle*, and secondary Causes concur as Means and Instruments, yet *Victory is of the Lord*, Prov. 21. 31. And though sometimes for wise and righteous Ends he permits unjust Arms to prosper and triumph over a righteous Cause, of which we have a woful Instance in our Memory ; yet ordinarily, and regularly, he declares on the righteous side, and awards Success according to the Justice of the Cause. For Battle is an Appeal to God, in which the contending Parties joyn Issue to put their Case in his Hands, and refer the Justice of their Cause to his Award and Determination ; and being hereby constituted the sole Arbitrator between 'em, he ordinarily decides the Victory according to the Right of the Cause ; and, unless there be some very great Reason moving him to the contrary, awards it to the juster Side. They therefore who make an unjust War, appeal to God in a wrong Cause ; and therefore have all the Reason in the World to expect, that he will decide against 'em, and finally award the Victory to their Enemies.

'Tis true, God is not oblig'd in Justice, always to determine the Victory to the just Cause : For there may be just Reasons, and many times there are, moving him to the quite contrary. Sometimes it may be more for the publick Good, of which he is the great Conservator, that this particular righteous Cause should miscarry, than that it should prosper and succeed ; in which Case, it's but reasonable, that he should rather permit a particular Mischief, than hinder a publick Convenience. Sometimes a good Cause may be more effectually advanc'd by a present Overthrow, than by a Victory ; and when this happens, it's a good Reason why God should at present pronounce the Sentence of Victory on the contrary Side. Sometimes it may be necessary to deny Success to those who have the righteous Cause on their side, in Order to the crowning it with some greater Blessing ; and in taking away a less Good, to make Room for a greater, is such an Exchange, as is far from Robbery.

And Lastly, Sometimes for the Sins of those on the right Side, which may be such as do render it, not only fit, but necessary, for God to make 'em Examples to the World of his righteous Severity. And what greater Severity can he express, than to abandon a good Cause, and rather permit it to fall to the Ground, than see it upheld and supported by impious and prophane Hands ? But though there are these, and sundry other just Reasons why God should not always award Success and Victory to the right Side ; yet doubtless, he ordinarily doth so : For all War is between one Prince and Nation, and another, or else between Princes and rebellious Subjects. Now, as for the first, it is in most Cases impossible for us certainly to determine which of the two Parties hath the rightful Cause ; because we do not understand the Pretensions on both Sides ; nor are we capable of judging of those nice Reasons, and intricate Circumstances upon which their opposite Claims depend ; and therefore though we, through our Pity and Ignorance

rance together, do commonly pronounce the vanquish'd Cause the best, and upon that Account do foolishly murmur at the Decisions of Providence, as if they were unjust and unequal; yet God, who sees through all the Circumstances of things, doth many times most certainly know the contrary, and so determines the Cause contrary to our blind Pity and Ignorance, according to his own infallible Judgment: And had we but the Understanding of God, I make no Doubt, but we should find many of those prosperous Causes which we condemn for unjust, to be most just and righteous, and be fully satisfy'd that the Awards of Providence in the Cause are much more equal than we imagine. But then, as for the other Sort of War, *viz.* That between Princes and their rebellious Subjects, it's evident, that Providence doth much more constantly decide the Success to the just and righteous Cause, and give Judgment on the Side of the injured Prince, against the rebellious and usurping Subject. For if you consult History, you will find, that though for just and righteous Ends, God hath sometimes permitted Rebellions to succeed; yet where he hath prosper'd one, he hath usually curs'd and blasted twenty. And indeed, since War, as was before observ'd, is an Appeal to God, the great Arbitrator of all Events; there are peculiar Reasons why he should more constantly declare himself for the right Side in a rebellious War, than in any other:

First, Because Rebellion is an Appeal to him in a Cause that is plainly and apparently unjust.

Secondly, Because 'tis an Appeal to him, in a Cause that very nearly touches and affects his own Authority.

Thirdly, Because 'tis an Appeal to him, in a Cause, that is, of all others, most destructive of Human Society.

First, Because Rebellion is an Appeal to God in a Cause that is plainly and apparently unjust: For in those Wars that are between Princes and Princes, the Right or Wrong of the Cause is many times not easily decidable: The *Meum's* and *Tuum's* of Princes and Nations, being very often so blended and confounded by Conquests, Leagues and Intermarriages, and Revolutions of Empire, that 'tis not only difficult, but sometimes impossible to determine on which side the Right lies: And tho' the contending Princes may in most Cases, perhaps, be able to inform themselves, whether the Cause they contend for, be right or wrong; yet the People can be no competent Judges of it; but are oblig'd to acquiesce in their Prince's Judgment, and to follow 'em with an Implicit Faith: So that if they are in the wrong, 'tis through invincible Ignorance, which renders their Cause extreamly pitiable and excusable before the just and righteous Tribunal of God. And therefore though he most perfectly understands on which side the Right lies, be the Cause never so perplex'd or intricate; yet his Compassion to their mistaken Innocence, may, in Concurrence with other Reasons, especially when their Enemies Sins do outvy the Justice of their Cause, sometimes prevail with him to give Judgment of Victory on their side. But as for Rebellion, the Injustice of it is far more visible and apparent; every Man knows, or might easily know, if he were not extreamly wanting to himself, that his King is the Vicegerent of his God; and that being so, he is indispensibly oblig'd by all the Ties of Reason and Religion to submit to his Will, and reverence his Person, and bow to his Authority; and that he cannot lift up his Hand against him, without fighting against God himself; the Truth of which is as obvious to our natural Reason, and as plainly asserted in holy Scripture, as of any Proposition in Religion: So that I dare boldly affirm, a Man may find as fair Pretexts for any Vice whatsoever, even for Drunkenness, Whoredom or Perjury, as ever were made for Rebellion. And were I to set up for a publick Patron of Wickedness, I hardly know a Villainy in Nature so black and monstrous, which I could not more plausibly recommend to Mens Reason and Consciences, than this of Resistance against Lawful Authority; which is such a Complication of Villanies, such a loathsome Mixture of Hellish Ingredients, as is enough to nauseate any Conscience but a Devil's. And though Conscience and Religion are the Colours it

usually marches under, yet is the Imposture of this Pretence so fullsome and barefac'd, that no Man in his Wits can be innocently abus'd by it. For certainly that Man must have a great mind to rebel, his Will must have a strong Byass of Pride or Discontent, Faction or Ambition in it, that, in despite of all the Evidence from Reason and Scripture to the contrary, can persuade himself, that it is lawful for him, and much less, that it is his Duty to lift up his Hand against his Sovereign. And therefore, for Men to appeal to God in a Cause so apparently wicked, is not submissively to refer themselves to him, but openly to mock and affront him: Were the Case obscure and difficult, though it were unjust, it were excusable, and might fairly admit of a Reference to the righteous Arbitration of God: But to make a vexatious Appeal to his Judgment again, in a Case which he hath so often and so expressly judged already, is a common Barretry; 'tis not to consult, but to tempt him; and under Pretence of submitting to his Determination, openly to defie his Authority: In Effect, 'tis to appeal from his Will to his Providence, and to bespeak him to declare himself against his own Declaration. In this Case therefore, where the Injustice of the Cause is so apparent, and consequently the Appeal to him about it, is so profane and insolent, God is more peculiarly concern'd, as Sovereign Arbitrator, to award for the right Side, by delivering up the Rebel as a Sacrifice to the just Revenge of his injur'd Prince.

Secondly, Rebellion is an Appeal to God in a Cause wherein his own Authority is very nearly touch'd and affected, in Wars between Princes and Nations. The unjust Side indeed, offends against his Authority, by refusing to submit to the Laws of Justice, and consequently are accountable to him for high Undutifulness and Disobedience; which is no more than the common Case of all Wilful Offenders against the Laws of Heaven: But in the Case of Rebellion, there is not only a peremptory Disobedience to those Laws of God, which require our dutiful Submission to our lawful Superiours; but also a direct Renunciation of the divine Authority it self: For all Sovereign Power is immediately founded in the Dominion of God; who being the Supreme Lord of the World, no Person can have Right to govern in his Kingdom under him, but by Commission from him: For every Supreme Authority is the Head and Fountain of all other Authorities, so far as it extends; and if it be not so, it cannot be Supreme. So that unless all Authority be deriv'd from God, he can have no such thing as Supreme Authority in the World; and if it be all deriv'd from him, then all those Persons who are vested with Supreme Authority under him, must derive and hold it immediately from him; and if they hold it immediately from him, they can be accountable for the Exercise of it to none but him: And if so, then for any of their Subjects to presume to call 'em to Account by a Publick Form'd Resistance, is to arragin God's own Authority, and invade his Peculiar; 'tis to thrust him out of his Throne, and set themselves down in it, and there to summon his Authority before 'em, and require it to submit its awful Head to their impious Doom and Sentence. For since in their several Dominions all Sovereign Powers are next to, and immediately under God, 'tis by his Commission alone that they act, and therefore to his Tribunal alone that they are accountable: So that by resisting them, we do as directly resist God, whose Deputy-Governours they are, as a *Neapolitan* doth the King of *Spain*, by levying Arms again his Vice-Roy of *Naples*; and by refusing to obey their just and lawful Commands, we demur to God's Authority, who in every just thing they impose or require, speaks to us by their Mouths, and commands us by their Law: For so the Scripture tells us, not only that *they are ordained of God*, and that too *to resist them, is to resist the Ordinance of God*; not only that they are *the Ministers of God*, and that therefore *for Conscience sake*, or in Reverence to his Authority, which they bear, they are to be obeyed, *Rom. 13. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.* but also that *they judge for God, and not for Men*, *2 Chron. 19. 6.* and that therefore *their Judgment is God's*, *Deut. 1. 17.* Whilst therefore we behave our selves factiously and rebelliously towards those whom God hath set over us, we live as Out-laws in the Kingdom of God, without

out any respect to that Visible Authority by which he governs the World. And if this be so, then for Subjects to rebel against their Prince, is neither better nor worse, than to appeal to God against his own Authority, and to put this impious Cause to him, Whether it be He, or They, that have the Right of governing the World: For this is the natural Language of every Rebellious Appeal to God; 'Lord, we refer it to thee, whether it be not just and lawful for us to take up Arms against thee, to renounce and cast off thy Dominion over us, and fly in the Face of that Visible Authority by which thou art pleased to Rule and Govern us. Judge now, we beseech thee, between thy self and us; let the Event decide the Right of the Cause; and do thou prosper and succeed us in this our Undertaking, according to the Justice and Righteousness of our Cause'.

When therefore his own Authority is thus nearly touch'd, by an Appeal so impious and audacious, it's high time for him, unless some mighty Reason intervene to the contrary, to stir up his Strength, and bear his Arm in the vindication of his injur'd Right, and affronted Authority; and by delivering up the insolent Rebel to condign Punishment, to assert and maintain his Dominion over the World.

Thirdly and *Lastly*, Rebellion is an Appeal to God, in a Cause, that is of all others, the most destructive of Human Society: Which is another peculiar Reason why God should decide against it, rather than against any other unjust War whatsoever. For God being the Sovereign Head of Human Society, we may be sure, that the Principal End of his Government is the Publick Good; that being infinitely happy within himself, and from the immense Perfections of his own Nature, he can have no Self-Ends to serve in ruling and governing the World; but that his great Design is to bless his Subjects; and by diffusing his Goodness through the World, to make 'em all Partakers of his Happiness. And if it be so, then we may certainly depend upon it; that as those Things and Actions are most grateful to him, which are most beneficial; so those are most odious and offensive to him, which are most prejudicial to the World. Now there is no one thing whatsoever that is more beneficial to the World than Government, which is the Soul of Human Society, by which it exists and operates, without which it must inevitably dissolve, and its united Parts immediately disband and fly in Pieces. For an ungoverned Society of Men is no better than a Herd of Wolves and Tygers, whose cross Interests, inconsistent Humours, extravagant Passions and Affections, are perpetually prompting 'em to tear and worry one another; by reason of which it is impossible for 'em to live together with any Comfort or Security; but either they must submit their Passions to be restrained by Law, and their Interests to be balanced and adjusted by Government; or withdraw themselves, like other Beasts of Prey, into Dens and secret Retirements, and there live poor and solitary, as *Bats* and *Owls* do, and subsist like Vermin, by robbing and filching from one another.

Since therefore Government is so indispensibly necessary for the Commonwealth of Men; to be sure, God, who is Supreme Lord of all, and the great End of whose Government is the Good of the Whole, must have a very tender Respect and Regard for it, and an implacable Aversion to every thing that is destructive to it. Now it's certain, there is nothing so destructive to Government, as Rebellion: For as for Wars between Prince and Prince, and Nation and Nation, they are indeed the Plagues and Scourges of Nations: Whereas Rebellion carries the same Slaughters and Devastations with it; and besides that, it strikes at the very Foundations of Government. For tho' the Design of the Leaders of Rebellion, is not to destroy Government, but to usurp and ravish it out of the Hands of the Lawful Possessors; yet their Practice tends directly to the Destruction of it. For whenever Subjects levy Arms against their Sovereign, they actually throw off the Yoke of his Government; and if they may throw off his, they may, for the same Reason, throw off another's, till at last they have thrown off all, and utterly dissolve themselves into a wild Tumult and Confusion.

on: Which being once admitted, Government can have no Foundation to rest on, but the Humour and Caprice of a wild Multitude, that is to be governed no otherwise, and no longer than it pleases. And how is it possible for any Frame of Government whatsoever to subsist upon such fickle and mutable Principles? So that when Subjects rebel against their Sovereign, they appeal to God against the very Being of Government it self, which is the Life and Soul of all Human Society; and do in effect desire him finally to determine by the Issue and Event of things, whether it be just and reasonable, that they should be ruled and governed. When therefore the Point they contend for is so apparently destructive to Human Society, of which he himself is the Supreme Head and Sovereign, and the final Decision of it is referr'd to his Arbitration; we have all the reason in the World to presume, that he who is *the God of Order, and not of Confusion*, will, without some mighty Inducement to the contrary, damn the Rebels Cause, and award Success and Victory to the Government.

Since therefore there are so many peculiar Reasons why the Lord of Hosts, the mighty God of War, should arm his Almighty Power against the Rebellious, this ought to caution us not to engage in any factious, disloyal, or rebellious Design against our Prince and Government; because in so doing, we take the most effectual Course that it's possible for Men to do, to oblige the Almighty Providence of Heaven to fight against us: For there is no one Sin in the black Catalogue of the Works of Darkness, which God is more concerned to punish in this Life, than this of Treason and Rebellion. And accordingly, if you consult those Monuments of Divine Vengeance, which are transmitted to us both in Sacred and Prophane History, you will find, that there are none of any sort so Numerous and Remarkable, as the dire and infamous Tragedies of Rebels. And tho' from these no certain Conclusion can be made of the Fate and Issue of all particular Rebellions, because there are Instances of some that have prosper'd and succeeded; and particularly, of one among our selves, and in our Memory, which, next to the Rebellion of the Fallen Angels, was perhaps, the most Barbarous and Infamous that was ever acted on the Stage of Nature. Yet this I am certain of, that were it my Design to draw down some Exemplary Judgment on my own Head, and even to intail the Vengeance of Heaven upon my self and my Posterity, I could not propose to my self a more probable and effectual Way, than Rebellion: Which, of all the Crimes and Villainies that have ever been perpetrated, either by Devils or Men, hath ever prov'd most fatal to the Actors of it. Wherefore, as we would not make our selves the Marks of Divine Vengeance, and expose our guilty Heads to its Almighty Thunderbolts, it concerns us to be mighty careful, that we do not swerve from our due Allegiance to our Prince, that we do not suffer our Pride and Discontent to prey upon our Loyalty, nor imbibe seditious Principles, nor intrigue our selves with factious Combinations, which are the Seminaries of Rebellion: But that out of an awful Fear and Dread of God, we honour and obey the King; and avoid, as we would the Air of a Plague-Sore, meddling with those that are *given to Change*.

I now proceed to the Second Observable in the Text, *viz. That God's delivering up of Rebels, is a just Ground of Praise and Thanksgiving to him*: For the Proof of which, I shall not need to urge any other Argument, than the signal Defeat and Overthrow of this late Rebellion, for which we are now rendring our thankful Acknowledgments to God. For considering the Temper and Quality of the Persons of which this unnatural Rebellion was compos'd, a very small Prophet may easily prognosticate, to what a deplorable Condition this Nation must have been reduc'd, if it had prosper'd and succeeded: For it was nothing but a common Sewer, into which all the Kennels of the Nation ran; being partly made up of the most debauch'd and profligate Atheists, that had broke through all the Laws of Humanity, and stript themselves so naked of all the Shew of Piety and Virtue, that they had not Hypocrisie enough remaining to disguise their lewd and villainous Intentions; partly of beggarly Malecontents, who had no other way

to repair their broken Fortunes; but by running in to the Shipwrack of the Nation; but chiefly of hot-brain'd furious Sectaries, whose blind Zeal, like the Devil in the possess'd Man, threw 'em into Fire and Water, transported and hurry'd 'em into any Villainy, into Perjury and Murder, Treason and Sacrilege, and would not permit 'em to stop at any thing that made for the Interest of their Cause; such were the Ingredients of this poisonous Mixture. So that had God for our Sins permitted it to prevail, we had quickly seen a Flourishing Kingdom, like *Herod* in all his Glory and Splendor, seiz'd on, eaten up by Lice, by a Swarm of the basest and most infamous Vermin that ever bred out of the Filth of a Nation: We had seen the Atheist glutting his Lust with the Rapes of our Wives and Daughters, and quaffing the Tears of Widows and Orphans: We had seen the Beggar on Horseback flaunting in the Spoils of our Fortunes, and triumphing on the Heads of our Nobles and Gentry; and the bloody Enthusiast imbruing his Hands in Loyal Blood, appeasing his furious Zeal again with Royal Sacrifice, and throwing down all that is Sacred in our *Jerusalem*, to make way for erecting his Phantick *Babel*, his Tumult and Confusion of Religions. In a Word, we had seen our Laws trampled on, our Liberties enslav'd, and our yet Sacred and Virgin-Throne, to our everlasting Infamy, deflour'd and profan'd by a spurious illegitimate Issue. With this dire Spectacle our Eyes had most certainly been entertain'd, had this black Rebellion succeeded: Wherefore our Gracious God, being mov'd to Commiseration by this woful Prospect of our approaching Calamity, rous'd up himself, like a mighty Man of War; and with an avengeful Eye, *looked down* upon this Host of *Assyrians*, and with the Breath of his Nostrils scatter'd the Rebellious Rout before him. *Wherefore, not unto us, O Lord, not to our Conduct or Puissance, but unto thy Name be all the Glory and Honour.* And since we are all of us Sharers in this great Deliverance, it's just we should all return the Tribute of our Praise to our great Deliverer. *O give Thanks unto the Lord therefore; for he is good, because his Mercy endureth for ever. Let Israel now say, that his Mercy endureth for ever. Let the House of Aaron now say, that his Mercy endureth for ever. Let all them that fear the Lord, say, that his Mercy endureth for ever.*

And, as the best Return of Gratitude we can make to God, let us by our future Loyalty to his illustrious Vicegerent, by our firm Reliance on his Royal Promises, which hitherto have been ever sacred and inviolate; by our chearful Submission to his Laws, and constant Forwardness to oppose and detect all treasonous Designs against his Person and Government, endeavour, as much as in us lies, to render his Reign safe, and easie, and prosperous: And by our immovable Constancy in the Profession and Practice of our Holy Religion, the most pure and unsophisticated, the most primitive and loyal Religion of the Church of *England*; Let us endeavour to endear our selves to God, that so by our faithful Supplications, we may prevail with God to fix the Crown upon his Royal Head, to guard and protect his Sacred Person, to bless and secure his Government, to abate the Pride, assuage the Malice, and confound the Devices of his Enemies; and after he hath enjoy'd a long, a pious, and prosperous Reign upon Earth, to crown him with everlasting Glory in Heaven. To which Prayer, I am sure, all that are the genuine Sons of the Church of *England*, will, with a true Heart, and zealous Affection, say, *Amen.*

SERMON VI.

PREACH'D

At the Assizes at *Chelmsford* in the County of *Essex*, August 31, 1686.

R O M. xiii. 1.

Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers ; for the Powers that are, are ordained of God.

IN which Words you have, First, A Duty enjoyn'd, *Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers.* Secondly, A Reason enforcing it, *for the Powers that are, are ordained of God.* In the Duty there are Three Things considerable. First, The Extent of it, it is to *every Soul.* Secondly, The Matter of it, it is to be *subject.* Thirdly, The Object of it, *the Higher Powers.* Of each of which I shall discourse briefly.

First, Here is the Extent of this Duty, it is to *every Soul* ; that is, to every Man, of what Order, or Degree, or Quality soever ; whether he be high or low, rich or poor, spiritual or secular, none are exempt ; without any Exception either of *St. Peter* and his Successors, or of the Body of the People : For the Reason extends equally to both ; because *the Powers that are, are ordained of God.* They are by God's Commission, and rule by his Authority : And therefore neither the Bishop of *Rome*, nor the Majority of the People, can claim Exemption from this Duty of Subjection, without arrogating to themselves an Authority superiour to God's : For if we must be subject to them, because they rule by God's Authority, then it's certain, there are none that are subject to God, but are under the Force and Obligation of this Reason.

But then, *Secondly,* You have here the Matter of this Duty ; and that is, to *be subject* : In which comprehensive Phrase is included the whole Duty of Subjects to their Princes and Governours ; honouring their Persons, reverencing their Authority, assisting them against their Enemies, defending the Rights of their Government, and conscientiously rendring to them their due Customs and Tributes : But more especially, and particularly, it includes our free and ready Submission to them, in yielding a cheerful Obedience to their Commands, so far as we can innocently, and consistently with our Duty to God ; and where we cannot, in patiently undergoing all those Pains and Penalties they shall think fit to inflict on us for our Disobedience ; in suffering their unjust Persecutions without murmuring or Clamour, without disturbing their Government, or resisting their Authority, or endeavouring to repel their Force with Force ; but meekly submitting our Cause to the Judgment of God, who is the Patron and Protector of oppressed Innocence. But for our clearer Understanding this necessary Duty of Subjection to our Princes and Governours, I shall briefly explain the Particulars implied in it, which are these Five :

First,

First, It implies our ready and chearful Obedience to them in all lawful Things.

Secondly, Our Obedience to them in all doubtful Things.

Thirdly, It implies our Obedience to them in all those Cases wherein we are not able to judge for our selves.

Fourthly, It implies great Wariness and Caution, in pronouncing against their Judgment and Determinations.

Fifthly, It implies our meek and patient Submission to the Penalties of their Laws and Determinations, when upon a full Persuasion of the Unlawfulness of them, we cannot actually comply with them.

First, This Subjection to our Prince implies our chearful and ready Obedience to him in all lawful Things : For, whatsoever God hath neither commanded nor forbidden by his own immediate Dictate and Authority, he hath authorized his Vicegerents to command or forbid, as they shall judge it most expedient for the Publick : So that when they command what God hath not forbidden, or forbid what he hath not commanded, their Will is God's ; who commands us by their Mouths, and stamps their Injunctions with his own Authority : And unless we admit this, we totally divest the Magistrate of his Power of making Laws ; because there remains no other Matter for new Laws, but only that which the Laws of God hath left indifferent : So that unless this may be commanded or forbidden by the Magistrate, he hath no new Matter left to make new Laws of. When therefore the Matter which he enjoyns or forbids, is left free and unrestrain'd by the Laws of God, we are obliged in Conscience by that Divine Authority which God hath vested him with, to render him a free and chearful Obedience.

Secondly, This Subjection to our Governours, implies our ready Obedience to them in all doubtful Things : For it is to be consider'd, that 'tis as much our Duty to obey our Governours in Things that are lawful, as not to obey them in Things that are unlawful : And therefore, if we only doubt whether their Commands are lawful, or no, our Doubt ought to make us as fearful of disobeying, as it doth of obeying them ; because the Danger of sinning is on both sides equal ; and therefore in this case, where we are necessitated to determine our selves one way or t'other, it is doubtless, our Duty to determine on that side which makes most for the publick Security and Peace ; which, next to the Honour of God, and the Salvation of Souls, ought to be preferr'd above all things : Wherefore in Cases of a doubtful Nature, 'tis both modest and safe, to subscribe to the Judgment of our Superiours ; because in so doing, we have not only our own Ignorance to excuse, but their Authority to warrant us ; and if we should happen to be in the wrong through our Modesty and Humility, 'twill be safer for us, than to be in the right, through our Pride and Self-conceit.

Thirdly, This Duty of Subjection to our Governours, implies our ready Obedience to them in all those Cases wherein we are not capable of judging for our selves : For he who refuses to obey his Governours in Matters that he cannot judge of, disobeys, he knows not why ; and to avoid doing that which he doth not know to be a Sin, refuses to do that which he knows to be a Duty : So that though that which he refuses, should be unlawful ; yet this cannot be the Motive of his Refusal, who understands not the Reasons which make it so : But by following the Reason of our Governours, where our own cannot guide us, we take the best course we can, not to be mistaken ; and if we should be mistaken, we have this to excuse us, That 'twas by following an Authority which God himself hath set over us ; whereas if we are mistaken on the other side, we are altogether inexcusable.

Fourthly, This Duty of Subjection to our Superiours, doth also imply great Wariness and Caution in pronouncing against their Judgment and Determinations : For by the Laws of Christian Modesty, we are oblig'd to believe our Governours to be wiser than we ; because they have a larger Prospect of Things, and greater Advantages of enquiring into them : And therefore, though we may have

have some little Probability that their Judgment is false, or their Command unlawful; yet we ought not presently to determine it so unless it be in such plain and evident Cases, as do not only out weigh the Probability of their Opinion, but the Authority of it too: For he who rashly rejects the Command of his Superiours as unlawful, plainly shews, that 'tis not so much the Sin of their Command that displeases him, as the Authority of it; and that 'tis not his Conscience that takes offence at it, but his Humour: For if it were Conscience, the Reverence which he bears to the Authority which commands him, would inspire him with an awful Respect to the Judgment of his Superiours, and a modest Suspicion of his own. He therefore, who upon every slight Appearance of Probability against the Judgment of his Superiours, immediately pronounces it false and erroneous, plainly shews, that he had too little Deference to them, and too much to himself; and while he thus undervalues their Wisdom, and overvalues his own, it's evident, that he wants a great deal of that Modesty and Humility that becomes a dutiful and obedient Subject.

Fifthly and Lastly, This Duty of Subjection to our Superiours, also implies our meek and patient Submission to the Penalties of their Laws, when upon a full Persuasion of the Unlawfulness of them, we cannot actually comply with them: For when the Commands of our Prince do interfere with the Commands of God, it is an undoubted Rule, that we must obey God rather than Man: But then at the same time that our Allegiance to the Throne of Heaven obliges us to refuse *Active* Obedience to our Temporal Prince, it indispenibly obliges us to render *Passive*, and not to use any Violence against him, though it be in the Defence of our Estates, or Liberties, or Lives, or, which ought to be dearer than all, our Religion: For the just Use of Violence is founded in a just Authority over the Person upon whom it is exercised; and supposes a Right in him that uses it, to call the Person to account against whom he uses it, and punish him according to his Demerit; without which Right, the Use of Violence is an injurious Outrage and Oppression: But Sovereign Princes are in their several Dominions next to, and immediate under God, the most high Sovereign of the World; and therefore having no Authority but his above them, are accountable only to his Tribunal: So that for Subjects in any case whatsoever, to offer Violence to their Prince, is to usurp the Throne of God, and invade his Sovereign Tribunal: For in offering Violence to them, we claim a Superiority over them; and in so doing, impiously trespass on the Peculiar of the Almighty, and arrogate his Divine Prerogative of being King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. For since God alone is placed above them, as being the sole King of Sovereign Kings, how can we assume Superiority over them, without setting our selves in the Place of God? Unless therefore we will render our selves guilty of the highest Affront to, and Prophanation of the Divine Majesty, we have no other Remedy, whenever we are reduc'd to that Extremity, as that we cannot obey our Prince without disobeying God, but to discharge our Duty courageously and faithfully to God, and meekly and quietly to submit to the unjust Persecutions of our Prince, referring our Cause to that Sovereign Tribunal, before which Princes and Peasants must one Day give an Account together, for every unjust and unrighteous Action. And though this may seem a hard Chapter to those who consider only one side of the Case; yet there is nothing more apparent, than that the Liberty of resisting Princes, would prove a far greater Mischief to the World, than all the Cruelties and Oppressions of the most barbarous Tyrants: For what though there never was any Governour so wise and good, as not to be chargeable with some Faults and Miscarriages; we ought to consider, that our World must be govern'd by Men, and not by Angels; and that perhaps there never was any Lawful Prince so bad, the Benefits of whose Government did not far out-weigh the Mischiefs of his Tyranny; and that therefore it is wisely eligible for us, rather to suffer a less Evil, than to deprive our selves of a greater Good. It is a notable Saying of *Tacitus*, where he brings *Cerealis*, the Roman General, thus bespeaking his Revolted Soldiers; *Quomodo sterilitatem, nimios im-*
bres

hres & cætera naturæ mala, sic luxum vel avaritiam dominantium tolerate : Vitia erunt donec Homines, sed neque hæc continua, & meliorum interventu pensantur ; i. e. You must bear the Luxury and Covetousness of your Rulers, as ye do Barrenness and unseasonable Showers : There will be Faults as long as there are Men ; but bad Men are not always ; and we are generally compensated for them with a Succession of good. But had God left us at Liberty to resist when we are oppressed, the Consequence of this must have been an eternal State of War ; in which, instead of suffering the Oppressions of one Tyrant, we should every one turn Tyrant to every other ; and therefore 'tis apparently for our good, that he hath tied up our Hands. And thus with all possible Brevity, I have explain'd the Particulars included in this Duty of Subjection.

I now proceed to the Third and Last Considerable in this Duty, *viz. the Object of it, viz. the Higher Powers* : By which it's evident, we are to understand the Persons of Sovereign Princes and Governours, and not the Laws and Constitutions, as some of our Republican Doctors pretend : For this Epistle was writ either under *Claudius* or *Nero*, whose Wills were the only Laws they govern'd by ; and yet these were the *Higher Powers* to whom the Apostle requires our Subjection ; and those whom he here calls *the Higher Powers*, in the 3^d Verse he calls *the Rulers*, and in the fourth Verse he tells us, that this Higher Power is *the Minister of God, and a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doeth Evil* ; which must necessarily be meant of the Governours, and not of the Laws : And accordingly, *St. Peter* thus explains it, *1 Pet. 2. 13. Be subject to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's Sake, whether it be to the King, ὡς ὑπὲρ κυρίου as supreme* ; which is the very Word that is here used for *the Higher Powers* : So that by the *Higher Powers* here, must be meant the Person or Persons that are vested with the Supreme and Sovereign Power : For that in every Nation there should be a Sovereign Power, is as indispensibly necessary, as that there should be a Government : For wherever there is any Government, there must be a last Appeal ; otherwise no Difference or Controversie can ever be finally decided ; and wherever the last Appeal is, whether it be to a King, a Senate, or to the Majority of the People, there must be Absolute and Sovereign Power from which there can be no farther Appeal, and against which there can be no Opposition or Resistance : For to talk of a Supreme Power which is not unaccountable and irresistible, is Nonsense : For whatsoever Power is liable to be call'd to Account, or resisted, hath a Power that is superior to it, and cannot be Supreme : And accordingly the Apostle declares in the Verse ensuing my Text, that *whosoever resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God, and that they that resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation*. Now the Supreme Power to which we of this Nation owe Subjection, is the King ; whom our Laws declare and recognize to be our Supreme and Sovereign Lord : For so, for Instance, the Statute of *Præmunire* declares, that *the Crown of England is in no Earthly Subjection, but immediately subject to God in all things touching the Regality of the same* ; and *25 H. 8. 21.* makes this Recognition to his Majesty, *That his Grace's Realm hath no Superiour under God, but only his Grace ; and that next unto God, they owe him a natural and humble Obedience* : And in other Laws it is declar'd, to be High Treason to levy Arms against the King, either within or without the Realm ; and that it is unlawful for both, or either Houses of Parliament, to raise, or levy War offensive or defensive, against his Majesty, or his Heirs and lawful Successors ; and that it is not lawful upon any Pretence whatsoever to take up Arms against the King ; and that we are to abhor that Traiterous Position, of taking Arms by his Authority against his Person, or against those who are commission'd by him. By all which it is abundantly evident, who this Higher Power is among us, and to whom we are to render our Subjection.

Having thus explain'd the Terms of the Duty, I proceed in the next Place, to the Reason of it ; *for the Powers that are, are ordained of God.*

All Sovereign Princes do derive their Power and Authority from God, whose Almighty Providence doth more peculiarly concern it self in the Disposal of Crowns and Scepters, and doth influence all Second Causes to conspire in the Advancement of such Persons to Empire, as he himself has first chosen and approv'd : For there is no Person can have Right to govern in God's Kingdom under him, unless it be by Commission and Authority from him : And indeed to derive the Authority of Sovereign Princes from any other Head, but God, is in Effect to deny him to be the Supreme Governour of the World ; which those Persons would do well to consider, who made the People the Fountain of Regal Authority : For as on the one Hand, if it be by God's Authority that Kings reign, it is God that governs by them, and not the People ; so on the other, if it be by the Peoples Authority, it is the People that govern by them, and not God : If it be the Choice of the People that makes their Prince, without any Commission or Authority from God ; then it is certain, that Princes are the Peoples Vicegerents, and not God's : But now in all Governments the Supreme is the Fountain of all inferiour Authorities ; and if there be any Authority within its Jurisdiction that is not from it, and dependent upon it, it must be co-ordinate with it, and then it cannot be Supreme. How then can God be supreme Governour of the World, when there are other co-ordinate Authorities with him that are independent from him, and that owe not their Being to him ? The Peoples Choice therefore even in Elective Governments, can signifie no more than the bare presenting of a Person to God, to be authoriz'd his Vicegerent by him ; who, if their Choice be just and lawful, is supposed to direct them to it by his Providence, and consequently to consent to, and approve it, and thereby to authorize the Person so presented : For Sovereign Authority in the Abstract, is ordain'd and instituted by God ; but Abstracted Authority cannot govern without a Person vested with it ; and to vest him with it, he must not be only apply'd to the Authority, but the Authority must be applied to him : But now where the People have a Right to Election, they can only apply the Person to the Authority ; but 'tis God's Consent and Approbation which applies the Authority to the Person, who thereupon commences Supreme under God, and hath no superiour Tribunal, but God's to account to : And thus, according to the Prophet *Daniel*, *the most High rules in the Kingdoms of Men* ; because as Lord of all the Lords, and King of all the Kings of the Earth, he rules by their Ministry, and they rule by his Authority : And hence in Scripture they are said to be *the Ministers of God*, Rom. 13. 6. *The Christs or anointed of the Lord*, Isa. 41. 5. *And are stil'd Gods, and the Children of the most High*, Psal. 82. 6. And hence also they are said to act in God's Stead, *and to judge, not for Men, but for God*, 2 Chron. 19. 6. And their Kingdoms are said to be given them by God, and they to be advanc'd to their Thrones by God, 2 Dan. 21. 37.

Since therefore all Supreme Powers are ordain'd, and commission'd, and authoriz'd by God, it hence necessarily follows, that to refuse Subjection to them, is no less than Open Rebellion against God himself : For Kings in their several Provinces, are the Vice-Roys of the Almighty Sovereign of the World ; and therefore, as he who denies Subjection to the King's Vice-Roy, affronts the Authority of the King ; so they who deny Subjection to the King, brave and affront the Authority of the King of Kings : For since it is by God's Authority that the King rules, 'tis God's Authority that they refuse to be ruled by : For whatsoever the personal Qualifications of Princes are, we ought to consider, that the Character they bear, is Divine, as being a Ray and Representation of the great Majesty above ; and therefore 'tis not so much to them that we are oblig'd to bow down, as to the Divine Image which they bear about them ; so that like Ambassadors, they derive not their Honour from themselves, but from the Sovereign Majesty which they represent and personate ; and the Veneration we render them, like that which *Moses* paid to the Burning Bush, is not so properly render'd to them, as to the Divinity in them : Whether therefore they are good, or bad, we are oblig'd to respect them as the Supreme Vicegerents of God in the World, and to consider their Persons as

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consecrated with the Divine Majesty, which robes and invests them; and here-
in consists the Force of the Apostle's Reason, *for the Powers that are, are ordained
of God.*

And now having given you an Account of the Duty in the Text, *Let every
Soul be subject to the Higher Powers*, I shall crave leave, briefly to enforce it by
some other Motives and Considerations besides that which the Apostle here ur-
ges, *viz. That the Powers that are, are ordained of God.*

First, Consider, that upon our dutiful Subjection to our Prince, depends our
Temporal Happiness and Welfare: For, as without Government there can be no
Society; so without Obedience there can be no Government: And so long as
Men are indisposed to obey, the Government must be a Burthen to them, and they
to the Government: And whilst the Rulers and Subjects, instead of being Sup-
ports, are Oppressions to one another, they are in the ready way to dissolve and
fly in Pieces; and what can the Consequence of this be, but an overflowing De-
luge of Miseries and Confusions? Of the Truth of which, we of this Nation
have, not many Years ago, made a woful Experiment: For when, through our
restless Impatience of Subjection, we had pull'd down our Lawful Sovereign
from the Throne, and unhinged the ancient Frame of our Government, what
was the Issue of it, but Oppression, and Slavery, and endless Confusion? For when
once we had unfix'd our selves from our proper Center, how did we rowl through
every Form of Government, still addressing to each for Relief and Ease? And
when we had mov'd every Stone, and rais'd it to the Top of the Hill, it still
came tumbling down again upon us: So that ours, like *Sisyphus's* Labour, was
like to have no other End, but various, restless, and endless Calamity; till at
last, God took pity on us, and re-settled us on our ancient Foundations: So
that had it not been for this late shameless and barefac'd Rebellion, by which, if
God had not been more merciful to us, we had hurl'd back our selves again into
our old Confusions. I could never have imagin'd, we could have been so aban-
don'd of our Reason, as in the same Age to act over the same Tragedy again:
But if, as a just Punishment of our Sins, God should permit us to be so far infa-
tuated, as to sell our Liberties again, for fear of being enslaved; to fight against
the Principles of our Religion, in Defence of it; to rip up the Bowels of our
Native Country, to preserve it; and, in a Word, to go to Cross or Pile with a
Company of beggarly Malecontents, for our own Estates and Fortunes; and run
our selves into present and certain Mischiefs, to prevent future and contingent
ones: If these things, I say, should happen again, which God forbid, a very
small Prophet may easily foretel, the woful Consequence of it: And when we
shall see our Fields strewed over again with the Carcasses of our Friends and
Relations; our Cities, Towns and Countries laid waste by an unnatural War;
and shall come to cast up our Accounts, and to reckon all the Blood and Trea-
sure we have spent, only to purchase Confusion or Slavery; then we shall remem-
ber, perhaps, with Tears in our Eyes, that it was nothing but a Surfeit of Hap-
piness that caus'd our Misery. But, Beloved, I hope better things of you, and
of the Wisdom and dear bought Experience of the Age. If therefore we would
be secur'd from these publick Calamities, let us render to our Prince all dutiful
Subjection, the least Defect of which, is an apparent Advance towards Ruin and
Confusion.

Secondly, Consider, that upon our dutiful Subjection to our Prince, the Honour
of our Religion depends: For Men do generally esteem and value things accor-
ding to the present Good or Hurt which they do in the World; and even Religi-
on it self, though it be the most sacred Thing among Men, is usually valu'd by
the present Advantages which accrue from it; and how beneficial soever it may
be as to the other Life, if it should be found hurtful and mischievous in this, it
will be impossible to secure it from the Hatred and Contempt of Mankind.
Now there is nothing in which Men are at present more generally concern'd,
than in the Support and Security of the Government under which they live;

the Weal of which is like a publick Bank, in which every Subject hath his Stock and Share ; So that if once it should appear, that our Religion is mischievous to Government, Mankind would soon conspire to proclaim War with it, and to decry and explode it as a publick Nufance to the World. Now the Generality of Men do judge of Religion by the Actions of those that make the loudest Pretences to it ; and if once it appear that they are factious and ungovernable, those who understand no better, will certainly conclude, that it is their Religion that teaches them to be so ; and being possessed with this Opinion of it, it is no Wonder if they fall foul on it, and decry it for a common Make-bate and Kind-le-coal : For that which strikes at Government, strikes at Mankind. When therefore we represent our Religion as doing so, by making it a Pretence for Faction and Disobedience, we do what in us lies to alarm the World against it, and to expose it as a common Enemy to the publick Odium of Mankind : And I verily believe, should Men consult the Devil himself, what course they were best take to blast the Honour of Religion, he could not direct them to a more effectual one, than under sanctified Pretences to turn Rebels to the Government ; And accordingly, heretofore the Adversaries of Christianity could find no such effectual Calumny to blast and expose it, as this, that it was an Enemy to the Civil Government ; as wisely enough considering, that could they but infuse into Mankind a Belief of this Scandal, there was nothing could be more conducive to antidote Mens Minds against it, and to render it base and infamous in the Opinion of the World : Whilst therefore we conduct any seditious Design under the Holy Banners of Christianity, we joyn Hands with its open and profest Adversaries, and endeavour so far as in us lies, to defend their most malicious Calumnies against it ; and our factious Behaviour, glossed with Pretence of Christian Zeal, is a much stronger Proof of that Heathen Calumny, than all the Arguments of *Celsus*, and *Porphyrie*, and *Hierocles* together ; because the Confession of a seeming Friend, is of much more Credit, than the Accusation of an open Enemy : Whilst therefore we make our Religion a Colour for our Faction and Disloyalty, we confess it to be guilty of the most infamous thing that it was ever charg'd with, by the worst of its Enemies, *viz.* that it lays Trains of factious Principles in Mens Hearts and Consciences, on purpose to blow up Thrones and Governments, and throw the World into Ruins and Confusions : Whereas on the contrary, by our firm and unshaken Loyalty to our Governours, we give an ocular Demonstration to the World, that our Religion is good for the best Purposes ; that it is not only beneficial in order to our future Happiness, which being distant and invisible, is not so apt to affect Men ; but that it is the most effectual Instrument even of our present Safety and Welfare, as it is the great Prop of Thrones, and the surest Supporter of Government, upon which the Welfare of Mankind depends : And if we can but once convince Men, as we might easily do, by our steady Loyalty, that our Religion is the best Security of Government, without which the World of Men is a mere Wilderness of Wolves and Tygers ; we shall in this do it greater Honour, and give it more glorious Reputation in the World, than by our most demure and specious Pretences to Sanctity without it : For whatever Men may imagine, it is demonstrable, that Factious Godliness is a greater Reproach and Scandal to Religion than open Prophaneness and Impiety.

Thirdly, Consider, that upon our faithful Subjection to our Prince, the Safety of our Religion depends : For there is nothing in the World can more endanger our Religion, than our making it a Pretence for Rebellion : For hereby we inevitably expose it to the Hatred of Princes, and do what in us lies, to arm their Power against it : For by our Actions we do in Effect make this open Declaration to them ; *Sirs, To tell you plainly, ye may thank our Religion for our Disobedience ; we would be Loyal, but it will not suffer us ; and therefore ye were best have a Care of it : For if ye do not suppress it, it will undermine your Thrones, and one time or other arm the Hands of your People against your Persons and Dignities.*

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When therefore we set up our Religion against our Governours, we force them in their own Defence to set themselves against it, and to endeavour so far as in them lies, to root it out of the World; and if being provok'd by our Sedition, they should ever draw their Swords against it, it may thank us for it, who first began the Quarrel, and gave the Challenge, and did in Effect Declare by our Actions, that unless they forc'd us to lay down our Religion, our Religion would force them to lay down their Crowns; yea, and though we should succeed in our Rebellion, and prove too hard for our Governours, yet first, or last, our Religion will be sure to smart for it: For when we have pull'd down them, we must set up some others in their Room; and whosoever they are, though they may love the Treason by which themselves were advanc'd, to be sure they will hate the traiterous Religion, and never think themselves safe in their Usurpation, whilst those Principles prevail in the Consciences of the People, upon which they rebell'd against their former Governours: For let Men be never so zealous for seditious Principles whilst they are Rebels, you may depend upon it, they will be as zealous against them when they are Usurpers, and be as much concern'd to suppress and extirpate them, as ever they were before to uphold and propagate them: Of the Truth of which you have a notorious Instance in the late Usurper; who, though while he was a Subject, was a zealous Stickler for those Religious Pretences under which that barbarous Rebellion was conducted; yet was no sooner seated in the Throne, but he grew quite weary of them; and could he but have seduc'd our sequestred Clergy from their Natural Prince, which he sundry times attempted, would willingly have pull'd down those seditious Sects that rais'd him, and re-establish'd the Church of *England*, of whose inflexible Loyalty to Government he had had sufficient Experience.

Our Loyalty therefore is not only the honestest, but the wisest Provision we can make for the Safety of our Religion; because hereby we recommend it to Princes as the safest Guard of their Thrones, and the surest Defence of their Authority, as that which will secure and facilitate their Government, and tie their Subjects to them by their Hearts and Consciences; and when by good Experience they are convinc'd of this, they cannot be Enemies to it without being Enemies to themselves, and arming their Power against their own Authority.

Fourthly and Lastly, Consider that if we of this Nation had no other Motive, yet in mere Gratitude, we stand oblig'd to render faithful Subjection to our Princes: For considering with what an easie and indulgent Government, and with what a Succession of Excellent Princes God Almighty hath blessed us, I know no Nation under the Cope of Heaven that may be so happy as our selves, if we please: For as our Government is in the Frame and Constitution of it, a most easie Yoke, and gentle Burthen; so for sundry Ages we have had Princes as gentle and gracious as our Government; Princes that have studied our Ease and Happiness, and that have in nothing so much exceeded, as in Mercy and Indulgence towards us: For not to mention that glorious Lady Queen *Elizabeth*, that wise and learn'd, that peaceable and gracious Prince King *James I.* of the Blessings of whose Reigns but few, if any of us were Partakers; not to mention that pious and every way incomparable Prince *Charles I.* whose Sacred Blood is such a monumental Shame to Treason and Rebellion, as must make Rebels and Traytors, if they have any Modesty remaining in them, to blush and be confounded for ever. Besides these, it is not long since, that God Almighty hath depriv'd us of one of the wisest, most gracious and merciful Kings that ever sway'd a Sceptre; a King that had been long endear'd to us, not only by the Gentleness of his Reign, the Prudence of his Conduct, and the incomparable Sweetness of his Temper; but also by sundry miraculous Deliverances, and as miraculous a Restoration, a Restoration that proclaim'd and signaliz'd him the Darling and Favourite of the Divine Providence; a Prince that reign'd in all honest Hearts by the unconquerable Charms of his own native Goodness; which had Virtue enough in them, had the thing been possible, to have oblig'd Ingratitude, and even to have made Faction asham'd, and Phanaticism Loyal.

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And now to him, in despite of all the Hellish Machinations of a restless Faction, our present Rightful Lord peaceably succeeds; a Prince, whom God seems to have reserved on purpose to make us amends for the inestimable Loss we sustained in *Charles* the Wise and Good: And indeed, considering the Great and Princely Vertues which adorn his Mind, and shine through the whole Sphere of his Activity, we have all the Encouragement in the World to promise ourselves a Continuance of those Halcyon Days under his happy Influence, if by our Intestine Seditions we do not cloud and disturb them that we have so long enjoy'd under the auspicious Reign of his Brother: For if from an undaunted Courage and Firmness of Mind; if from an immense Greatness and Generosity of Soul; if from an inflexible Sincerity and Integrity of Manners; if from an impartial Justice, sweetned with an endearing Benignity of Temper; if from the fair Conjunction of these Royal Vertues in a Prince, a People may presage their own Happiness; we have all these to build our Hope on in our present Sovereign; who, to give an absolute Confidence to our Hope, hath graciously deposited in our Hands that sacred Pledge of his own Royal Faith, by a publick repeated Declaration, inviolably to preserve our Laws, and Liberties and Properties, and which ought to be dearer to us than all, the Establish'd Religion of our Church; which for Purity of Worship and Doctrine, for Antiquity of Discipline and Government, for Loyalty of Principles and Practice, outshines all the Churches in the World: And for us to mistrust the Security of that Faith, which yet was never forfeited to any Man, would be, not only rude and disingenuous, but unjust and malicious. So that considering the Admirable Frame of our Government, and the Unparallell'd Goodness of our Prince, we are certainly the most oblig'd Subjects in the World. And if after this, we should prove Factious and Disloyal, what will the World say of us, but that we are a People of a base and ungrateful Genius, whom no Goodness can endear or oblige? And what may we expect from God, but that, as a just Retribution for our black Ingratitude, he should make us feel the Smart of all those barbarous Tyrannies and Oppressions which hitherto we have unjustly complained of? Wherefore, unless we intend to render our selves both infamous to Men, and odious to God, let us chearfully comply with this Great Precept of our Religion, *Let every Soul of us be subject to the Higher Powers, forasmuch as the Powers that are, are ordained of God.*

SERMON VII.

Preach'd before

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor,
Aldermen, and Citizens of *London*, at
St. Mary Le Bow, September 2, 1686.

JOHN v. 14.

*Behold thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse
thing come unto thee.*

THESE Words are the Advice of our Saviour to the impotent Man, whom he miraculously cured, after he had long waited to no purpose at the Pool of *Bethesda*: And seriously when I consider the miserable State to which this Ancient City was reduc'd by the late stupendous Fire; and the since glorious Recovery of it out of its mighty Heap of Ruins, it seems to me an exact Emblem of this poor Patient in my Text. With him, not long ago, it was reduc'd to a wretched impotent Condition; its goodly Piles lay Bed-rid in their own sad Ruins, almost despairing of Recovery; and the utmost that Human Prudence could hope, was, that the next Age might see their Resurrection. But by the miraculous Courage and Industry with which God inspired their former Inhabitants, behold they are raised again within a few Years, more Glorious and Magnificent than ever: And we that saw their Desolations, and were almost ready to give them over for irreparable, have lived to see them rise again in State and Splendor out of their Ashes. And now that our City is reviv'd again, and flourishes in perfect Health and Vigour, methinks I hear the God of Heaven bespeak her, as our Saviour did his Recover'd Patient in the Text, *Go thy way, and sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* In which Words you have,

I. A Caution, *Sin no more.*

II. A twofold Reason of it,

1. *Behold thou art made whole.*

2. *Lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

I. I begin with the first of these, *Sin no more.* Which Words plainly imply, that he had been a Sinner heretofore; and that because he had so, therefore he was reduc'd to that wretched impotent Condition, that his Disease was the Punishment of his Fault, and the Product of his own Wickedness: For otherwise he had no reason to take warning by it not to sin again. If his former Impotence had not been the Effect of his Sin, it could not have been urg'd as a pro-
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per Argument to persuade him to a future Reformation. In this therefore the strength of our Saviour's Caution lies; The Impotence, under which thou didst so lately languish, and of which I have now recover'd thee, was inflicted on thee by God, as a just Retribution for thy Wickedness; and therefore, since thou art now happily recover'd, beware thou dost not sin again, lest thou provoke him to scourge thee more severely. So that the main Design of this Caution, is to convince us, that those Evils and Calamities under which we suffer, are some Way or other occasion'd by our Sin. And indeed, if we impartially survey those numerous Calamities which oppress the World, we shall find them generally reducible to one of these three Heads: Either (1.) They are the natural Effects of Sin, or (2.) The just Retributions of it, or (3.) The necessary Antidotes against it. Of each of these very briefly.

(1.) In the first place, many of those Evils and Calamities under which we suffer, are the natural Effects of Sin; and such, it's possible, was the Disease of which our Saviour cur'd this impotent Patient; even the natural Effect, either of his Intemperance, Wantonness, or immoderate Passion; which are the natural Causes of most of those Diseases under which we languish. For either they are intail'd upon us by our Parents, who beget us usually in their own Likeness; and so having diseased themselves by their own Debauches, derive to us their frail and crazy Constitutions, and leave us Heirs of the woful Effects of their own Intemperance and Lasciviousness: For so we commonly find the Stone and Gout, Consumption and Catarrhs, deriv'd through many Generations, from the Vices of one wicked Progenitor, who, to enjoy the Pleasures of an intemperate Draught, or the Embraces of a reeking Whore, doth many times entail a lingering Torment upon his Children, and his Childrens Children. Others, again, owe their Diseases to their own personal Vices; and by abusing their Bodies to satisfy their Lusts, convert them into wandering Hospitals; they suck in Rheums and Defluxions with their intemperate Draughts, and change the Pleasure of a sober and temperate Life, for Fever and the Uneasiness of Debauches; they swallow their Surfeits in their gluttonous Meals, and fill their Veins with flat and sprightless Humours, till by degrees they have turn'd their sickly Bodies into mere Statues of Earth and Phlegm; and, in the mean time, they waste themselves in their insatiable Wantonness, and sacrifice their Strength to the Insatiable Importunity, and many times contract those noisome Diseases that make them putrify alive, and even anticipate the Uncleanliness of the Grave. And as our bodily Diseases are generally the natural Effects of our Sin; so are most others of those Calamities under which we groan. Thus Want and Poverty are usually the Effects, either of our own Sloth or Prodigality, or else of the Fraud and Oppression of those we deal with; and Wars and Devastations, the natural Products, either of the Ambition or Covetousness of those who are the Aggressors. Thus Sin, you see, is the Pandora's Box, whence most of those Swarms of Miseries issue, that sting and disturb the World: And indeed, the God of Nature, to deter Men from Sin, hath coupled Misery to it so inseparably, that whilst he continues things in their natural Course, we may as soon be Men without being reasonable, as sinful Men without being miserable. Hence we find, That when he had tried all the Arts of Discipline on the obstinate Jews, and none were effectual, he at last consigns them to the dire Correction of their own Follies, *Jer. 2. 19. Thine own Wickedness shall correct thee, and thy Backsliding shall reprove thee.*

(2.) Again, Secondly, Many of those Evils and Calamities under which we suffer, are the just Retributions of Sin. For besides those numerous Evils that are naturally appendant unto wicked Actions, there are sundry others under which we suffer, that are the more immediate Effects of the Divine Displeasure, and are inflicted on us by God, as the condign Punishments of our Rebellions against him: and these are such as proceed not from any necessary Causality in the sinful Actions themselves; but are wholly owing to the Providence of Heaven; which either inflicts them immediately upon us, or else disposes second Causes, con-

contrary to their natural Tendency, to come to the Production of them ; such were the Drowning of the World, the Burning of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, the Judgment of *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*, and sundry other such like mentioned in the Scripture. And though in sundry of those Judgments which God inflicts upon sinful Men, his Hand doth not so visibly appear, as it did in those ; yet many of them are impressed with such visible Characters of the Divine Displeasure, that we have all the reason in the World to conclude them to be the immediate Effects of it. As, when we see some great and unexpected Calamity befall a Sinner in the very Commission of a wicked Action ; or when he is punish'd in kind, and the Judgment inflicted on him bears an exact Correspondence with his Sin ; or when, upon the Commission of some notorious Villainy, some strange and extraordinary Evil befalls him : In these, and such like Cases, although it's possible, they may be the Effects of some casual Concurrence of second Causes ; yet there being such plain Indications of design'd Punishment in them, it would be very unreasonable to attribute them to a mere blind and undesigning Chance. And therefore, although on the one hand it argues an uncharitable and superstitious Mind, to attribute every Calamity of our Brother to the righteous Judgment and Displeasure of God ; yet on the other hand, it's no less an Argument of a stupid wretched Soul, to attribute those Evils to Chance, on which there are such apparent Symptoms of the Divine Displeasure. And though there is no doubt, but many of those evil Events that befall us, do merely result from the establish'd Course and Order of necessary Causes ; yet there is no Man that owns either a Providence, or the Truth of Scripture, but must readily acknowledge, that in this establish'd Course of things God very often interposes, and for the rewarding of Good, and punishing of bad Men, so varies the Courses of these secondary Causes, as to produce Good and Evil by them, contrary to their natural Series and Tendencies. For should he have limited himself to the Laws of Nature, and resolv'd to keep things on for ever in one fatal and unvariable Course of Motion, he must have tied up his Hands from Rewarding and Punishing, which are the principal Acts of his governing Providence ; and consequently all his Promises and Threats of Temporal Blessings and Judgments, must have been perfectly null and insignificant. This therefore must be acknowledg'd by all that have any Sense of God and Religion, That many of those Evils under which we suffer, are the just Judgments of God in Retribution for our Folly and Wickedness. But I see I must hasten.

(3.) And *Lastly*, Many of those Evils and Calamities we endure, are inflicted as necessary Antidotes against Sin. For certainly considering the degenerate State of Human Nature, the Perverseness and Disingenuity of the generality of Mankind, Afflictions and Calamities are as necessary to keep us within the Bounds of Sobriety, as Chains and Whips are to tame Mad-men : And should the great Governour of the World still indulge to us our Wills, and accommodate all Events to our Desires, we should grow so extravagantly insolent, that 'twould be impossible to keep us within any Bounds or Compass ; and therefore, in charity to us, he is many times forc'd to cross us, and to inflict less Evils on us, to prevent greater. He sees, that if he should gratifie our fond Desires, 'twould be a cruel Kindness to us, and hurt us more than ever it would benefit us ; 'twould damp our Piety, or carnalize our Spirits, swell our Pride, or pamper our Luxury, give such a Loose to our extravagant Passions, as would in the End render us far more miserable than the Want of what we desire ; can do. And therefore, in mere pity to us, instead of giving us the Good we ask for, he sometimes inflicts the contrary Evil : and as Physicians sometimes prick a Vein in the Arm to prevent the Suffocation of the Heart ; so God many times afflicts us to preserve us, diseases our Bodies to antidote or cure our Souls. So that tho' those Evils which God inflicts upon us, are not always intended for Punishments of our Sin ; but sometimes for Preservatives against it : Yet in this Case as well as the other, 'tis Sin that is the Cause of it ; 'tis this makes the Evil necessary, and obliges God in Mercy to inflict it upon us. He knows, the Sin will injure us

much more than the Evil he prescribes to prevent it ; and therefore being much more solicitous for our Safety than our Ease, he chuses rather to make us smart, than to suffer us to perish. But if it were not for Sin, which is the worst of Diseases, he would have no need to antidote us with Afflictions ; nor doth he so much delight to grieve the Children of Men, as to afflict them for Affliction's sake. So that were it not for our Sin, either actual or in Prospect, we may be sure, he would neither punish nor afflict us. Thus Sin, you see, is the common Cause of Evil, the fruitful Womb of all kinds of Mischief : For I doubt not, but to one of these Three Heads most of the Miseries of Mankind may be reduc'd ; that they are either the natural Effects, the just Punishments, or the necessary Preservatives of Sin.

Hence therefore let us learn, under all Calamities to acknowledge our Sins to be the Cause of them, to trace up our Evils to the Fountain-head, which we shall find, is in our own Bosoms. From hence spring all those wasting Wars, those sweeping Plagues, those devouring Fires that make such Devastations in the World ; from hence are laid those Trains of Wild-fire that slaughter our Friends, blow up our Houses, and scatter so many Ruins round about us. O! would to God we would once be sensible of it ; that we would every one smite upon his own Thigh, and cry out, Lord, what have I done ! What Sparks have I added to the common Flame ! What Guilts have I contributed towards the filling up the Measure of *England's* Iniquities ! But alas ! hitherto we have generally taken a quite contrary Course to this. When God's Judgments are upon us, we confess, that Sin is the Cause of them indeed, but not ours by any means : 'Tis the Sin of the City, cries the Country ; 'tis the Sin of the Court, cries the City ; 'tis the Sin of this Party, cries one ; 'tis the Sin of t'other Party, cries another. Thus the Judgments of God are sent from Tithing to Tithing, and nobody will own them, though they call us all Fathers. Well, Sirs, we shall one Day find, (God grant it be not too late first) that this is not the Way to prevent the Incurfions of the Divine Judgments. If ever we mean to put a stop to God's Indignation against us, we must every one lay our Hands upon our own Breasts, and lament his own Sin, and acknowledge his own Share in the General Provocation, and promise and engage our selves, that wherever we have done amiss, we will do so no more : Which, if we wilfully refuse, though at present we are made whole, yet we may certainly expect, that *a worse thing will come upon us*. And this brings me from the Caution, to

II. The Reasons of it ; which, as I told you, are Two:

1. *Thou art made whole.*
2. *Left a worse thing come unto thee.*

1. I begin with the First ; *Behold, thou art made whole* : Therefore have a care thou sinnest no more : Let the Mercy I have shewn thee in curing thee of thy Disease, have this blessed Effect upon thee, to reclaim thee from thy Sins to a Life of Virtue and Purity. So that the Sense of this Reason is this, That God's Mercy to us in recovering us from past Calamities, lays a great Obligation upon us to reform and amend : But particularly, it lays upon us this three-fold Obligation ; (1.) The Obligation of Gratitude ; (2.) of Justice ; (3.) and lastly, of Self-Interest. Of each of these briefly.

1. God's Mercy in restoring us from any past Calamity, obliges us in Gratitude to amend our Lives. 'Tis doubtless, one of the most palpable Signs of a base profligate Nature, not to be oblig'd by Favours : 'Twould be an Injury to a Brute to call him ingrateful : That odious Epithet no Being can deserve, but one that is degenerated into a Devil, that has broke through all that is modest and ingenuous, that is tender and apprehensive in Human Nature. But to sin on against the Mercies of our Deliverer ; to take pleasure in provoking him, who took pity on us in our low Estate, and snatch'd us from the Brink of Ruin, is, doubtless, the highest Baseness and Ingratitude. For whilst we persist in our
sinful

sinful Courses, under the Obligations of his Goodness, we render him the greatest Good, and retort his Favours with the basest Indignities. Whilst he is shielding us with his careful Providence, we smite him with the Fist of Wickedness; and, like wretched Vipers, sting and wound him, whilst he is cherishing us in his Bosom. And is this a suitable Answer, do we think, to the Obligations he has laid upon us? O ungrateful Wretches that we are, do we thus requite the Lord our God? With what Confidence can we pretend to any thing that is modest and ingenuous, while we thus persist to return the Favours of our God with such insufferable Affronts and Indignities. But then,

(2.) *Secondly*, God's Mercy in restoring us from any past Calamity, obliges us in Justice to amend our Lives: For by restoring us, he acquires a new Right to us. As he is the Author of our Beings, he hath an unalienable Right and Property in all the Powers and Faculties of our Natures: But every time he restores us from an approaching Ruin, he doth, as it were, create us a-new; he gives us our Lives and Beings a-fresh, and thereby renews his Title to us; and so many times as he preserves us, so many Lives and Beings he giveth us; and consequently so many additional Rights and Properties he acquires in us. And when he hath so many Ways entitling himself to us, by creating, preserving, and restoring us, what monstrous Injustice is it in us still to alienate our selves from him, and list those Powers and Faculties into the Service of his Enemies, that are his by so many Titles? O unjust that we are, thus to fight against God with his own Weapons, and affront his Authority with the Effects of his Bounty! For by persisting in Sin under his Preservations, we do not only rob him of our selves, in whom he hath such an unalienable Propriety, but also employ our selves against him. We do not only purloin his Goods, but convert them into Instruments of Rebellion against him; than which there is nothing can be more outrageously injurious. O wretched Man; that very Tongue with which thou blasphemest him, had e're this been silent for ever, had not he stretched forth his Hand and restored thee. Those Eyes, through which thou shootest the noisome Fire-Balls of thy Lust, had been e're this clos'd up in endless Darkness, had not he taken pity on thee, and snatch'd thee from the Brinks of Ruin; those Members of thine, which thou employest as Instruments of Unrighteousness against him, had now been rotten in a cold Grave, had not his Tender Mercy preserv'd thee. And canst thou be such a barbarous Wretch, as not only to deny him the Use of what he gives; but even to injure him with his own Gifts? Consider, I beseech you, how heinously he must needs resent such monstrous Injustice and Ingratitude! Hear but how he complains in a parallel Case, *Isa. i. 2, 3. Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth; for the Lord hath spoken; I have brought up my Children, and they have rebelled against me. The Ox knows his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib; but Israel doth not know, my People doth not consider. Ah sinful Nation, a People laden with iniquity.*

(3.) *Thirdly and Lastly*, God's Mercy in restoring us from past Calamities, obliges us in Self-interest to reform and amend. For if we do not answer the End of God's Deliverances, they will prove Curses instead of Benefits to us; and what he intended for a Favour, will convert into an Aggravation of our Sin and Punishment. The great End why God deliver'd us, was to win us by his Goodness to forsake our Sins, and give us Space to repent of them: For to the Apostle tells us, *That the Goodness and Long-suffering of God leads us to Repentance, in Rom. 2. 4.* But if it doth not lead us thither, it will leave us in a far worse Condition than it found us, *i. e.* 'twill leave us loaded with much heavier Guilt, and bound over to much sorer Punishment. For he that sins on under his Preservations, is only preserv'd to *treasure up Wrath against the Day of Wrath*, and to prepare more Fuel for his future Flames. So that if he still persist in his Wickedness, it had been much better for him that God had let him alone to perish under his Affliction: For then he had past more innocent into the other World, and suffer'd there a much cooler Damnation. Whereas now, whenever his wretched Ghost departs into Eternity, it will go attended with a louder Cry of Guilt,

with the Cry of so many more wrong'd Mercies and abus'd Preservations ; which will most fearfully inhanse her Accounts, and inflame the Reckoning of her Torments : So that when she comes into the other World among those miserable Spirits that were snatch'd away in the common Calamities from whence she was rescu'd and preserv'd, she will find her self plung'd into a Condition so much more intolerable, that she will wish a thousand times she had been snatch'd away with them, that so she might never have had the Opportunity to contract those Guilts that are the woful Causes of it. Wherefore, as we would not make the Mercies of God the Causes of our Misery, and turn our Preservations into Judgments ; we are highly oblig'd upon every Recovery from past Judgments and Calamities, to reform and amend our Lives.

And now what remains, but that we seriously consider with our selves how much we are concern'd in this Argument. We of this Generation are a People whom God hath exercis'd with wondrous Judgments and Deliverances. We have many of us liv'd to see the Bowels of our Native Country ripp'd up by an unnatural War, the righteous Cause of the Prince and Father of our Country oppress'd by prosperous Villainy ; his innocent Blood, our Laws, Liberties, and Religion, sacrific'd to the Lust of Rebels and Usurpers : And when we had long suffer'd the consequent Miseries and Confusions, our merciful God took pity upon us ; and after a long Exile, and without the Charge and Smart of War and Bloodshed, restor'd to us again the lawful Heir and Successor of our Crown, and with him, our Liberties and Religion. This, one would have thought, was enough to oblige a People of any Ingenuity, and to endear to us for ever the Author of such a miraculous Mercy. But when instead of being reclaim'd by his Goodness we grew worse and worse, his Anger was kindled again against us ; and in his fore Displeasure, he breath'd forth a destroying Pestilence upon us, that in a few Months swept our Streets, unpeopled our Houses, and turn'd our Towns and Cities into *Golgotha's*. But in the midst of so many Deaths we were preserv'd, and under the Shield of that Providence were kept in Safety, when ten thousand Arrows flew about our Ears. And could we possibly resist the Powerful Charms of such an endearing, such a distinguishing Kindness ? Alas ! yes, we could, and did, and were so far from being conquer'd by it, that we grew more obstinate and rebellious. This incens'd him against us a-new, and with Firebrands in its Hands, his Vengeance came and kindled our Houses into a devouring Flame, that with wondrous Fury did spread and enlarge it self from House to House, and from Street to Street, till it had laid this famous *Metropolis* of our Nation in a Heap of Ruins. But yet in the midst of Judgment, God remembered Mercy ; and when the unruly Element had baffled all our Arts, and triumph'd over all our Resistance, God put a Bridle unto his Mouth, and stopp'd him in his full Career ; by which means a great Part of us were preserv'd, and snatch'd as Firebrands out of the Flame. And tho' many of us saw our Houses and Estates buried in the Ruins it made ; yet we have liv'd to see, and that within a few Years, the consum'd *Phoenix* rise out of her Ashes in greater Glory and Lustre than ever. And now, what have we rendred to the Lord for all these Mercies and signal Preservations ? O ungrateful that we are ! We have turn'd his Mercies into Wantonness, and fought against him with his own Favours : We have spent those Lives which he hath preserv'd to us, in grieving, provoking, and dishonouring him : We have turn'd those Houses he hath restor'd to us, into open Stages of Pride and Luxury : We have consum'd those Estates which he hath repair'd, in supplying our manifold Rebellions against him. Thus with his own Mercies we have wag'd War with him. What then can we expect, but that he should disarm us of those Mercies which we have so foully mis-employ'd, and thunder his Judgments upon us to avenge our Abuse of them ? For if he cannot melt our Obstinacy with the Fire of Mercy, 'tis fit he should attempt to break it with the Hammer of Judgment : And if when he hath try'd lighter Judgments, they will not do ; 'tis fit he should Second them with greater and heavier. Which brings me,

2. To the second Reason of the Caution in the Text, *Lest a worse thing come upon thee, i. e.* Beware thou dost not continue stubborn under the past Corrections, lest thou thereby provoke thy angry God to lay his Hand yet Heavier upon thee, and to scourge thee with Scorpions instead of Rods. For it is the usual Method of the Divine Providence, when lesser Judgments prove ineffectual, to second and enforce them with greater. Thus he threatens to deal with Israel, *Levit. 26. 21, 23, 24. And if ye walk contrary to me, I will bring seven times more Plagues upon you, according to your Sins. And if yet ye will not be reform'd by these things, but walk contrary to me; then will I walk contrary to you, and will punish you yet seven times more for your Sins.* And just as he threaten'd, so it came to pass: For as they continu'd obstinate under God's Judgments; so he continu'd to plague them sorer and sorer; till at last, perceiving their Disease to be incurable, he cut 'em off, and utterly destroy'd them. And in this Method of punishing Sinners gradually with sharper and sharper Strokes, when they continue obstinate under Correction, there is a great deal of Reason and Wisdom. For (1.) Their Obstinacy swells and enhances their Guilt, (2.) It renders severe Punishments necessary. And (3.) Those severer Punishments render their final Destruction more inexcusable. Of each of these briefly.

(1.) God punishes them with heavier, when they continue Obstinate under lighter Judgments; because their Obstinacy is a greater Aggravation of their Guilt: For though our Reason indeed tells us, That Sin is the greatest and most dangerous Evil in the World; yet Reason and Argument hath not comparably that Force to persuade Men, as their own Sense and Experience hath; and they will be much sooner persuaded of the Reality of any Evil, by feeling the Smart of it, than by a thousand dry Arguments against it. And therefore, though it be a great Aggravation of our Guilt, to sin against the clear Convictions of our Reason; yet 'tis a much greater, to sin against the sharp and dolorous Perceptions of our own Sense and Experience. But now, while the Judgments of God are upon Men, they feel the dire Effects of their Sin: And therefore, if notwithstanding this, they still persist in it, they sin against their Sense, as well as their Reason; which, is in effect, a plain Defiance of God, and a daring him to do his worst with us. For this, in effect, is the Sense and Interpretation of our Obstinacy: O God, I know, thou art angry with my Sins, by the dire Effects I now feel and experience: But be it known to thee, I despise thy Vengeance, and am resolv'd to sin on bravely in despite of all the Judgments thou canst arm against me. And what greater Aggravation of Sin can there be, than to repeat it with such a blasphemous Contempt of the Most High? He is a daring Thief, we say, that will venture to Rob within Sight of the Gallows; and he is as insolent a Sinner, that dares sin on in the Face of Judgment. It was look'd upon as a monstrous Piece of Contumacy in the Jews, that when God had only forewarn'd them by the Prophet, *Behold, I frame Evil against you, and devise a Device against you; return ye now therefore every one from his evil way; they return'd this arrogant Answer, There is no hope; but we will walk every one after his own Devices, and we will do every one the Imagination of his evil Heart. Jer. 18. 11, 12.* But how much more arrogant would it have been, had the Judgment which was only devised against them, been actually executed upon them! Such an Answer then had been a plain Declaration, That they were finally resolv'd to stand it out against God to the last, and to take no Quarter at his Hands, though they perish'd for ever in their Rebellions. And when Mens Guilts are thus enhanced, 'tis fit their Punishments should be proportionable: For otherwise they would be lookt upon as things that happen to Men without any Providential Disposal. But now, by regularly proportioning the Evils of Suffering to the Evils of Sin; and coupling lesser Evils with lesser Guilts, and greater with greater; and so equally balancing and adjusting the Punishment to the Fault; God makes his Arm bare to us, and gives us a plain Demonstration, That the Evils we suffer, are the Rods of his just Displeasure.

(2.) God punishes Men with heavier, when they continue Obstinate under lighter Judgments ; beause their Obstinacy renders heavier Judgments necessary. For Punishments being design'd by God for our Cure and Recovery, it's necessary they should be proportioned to the Degree and Strength of our Disease ; and consequently, when the Disease of our Sin is grown stronger and more malignant, the Remedy of our Punishment should be made sharper and more operative. For when Men are grown inveterately wicked, to attempt their Reformation with smaller Judgments, is to Batter a Wall of Marble with a Pot-Gun. Such Obstinate Rebels must be storm'd with the loudest Artillery of Heaven, before they will listen to a Surrender. An Anvil will as soon yield to the Fillip of our Finger, as a hardned Sinner relent under soft and gentle Corrections. He must be alarm'd with some rousing Judgment, and lash'd till he Bleeds again, under the Rods of the Almighty ; or, in all probability he will be undone for ever. His Disease is inveterate, and not to be remov'd, but by the strongest Catharticks ; and therefore to prescribe him a Course of gentle Physick, would be to try Experiments upon him, and vex and disturb him to no purpose. God therefore to cure the Folly and Obstinacy of Sinners, is many times saine to treat them with Rigour and Severity, when he finds the mild and gentle Methods of his Providence defeated by them : But first, usually, he tries the softer and more grateful Remedies ; being unwilling to grieve and afflict his Creatures, when there is any other way to Recover them. But when softer will not do, 'tis Mercy in him to apply severer ; and his Last most commonly are the severest ; these being the Causticks, as it were, which he is saine to apply to our Lethargick Souls when no other Means will awake and recover us.

(3.) And lastly, God punishes Men with heavier, when they continue Obstinate under lighter Judgments, to render their final Destruction more inexcusable if they won't be reclaim'd. For when God's Threats will not awake Men, he usually sends forth his smaller Judgments ; which, like the Van-Couriers of an Army, are to begin the Skirmish, before he falls on with his main Body to ruine and destroy them. Which Method he observes, out of great pity to his sinful Creatures ; whom he always threatens before he strikes, and always strikes before he destroys, that he may give them timely and effectual Warning to arm themselves by Repentance, to prevent their Destruction : And accordingly, the first Judgment he lets off, he designs for a Warning - piece to give notice of a second, and the second of a third, and all, of that ruining and exterminating Judgment which brings up the Rear, and is to conclude the Tragedy : So that his foregoing Judgments do still give notice of the following, and these of the succeeding ; and all of that final Destruction in the War which closely pursues ; and, unless we repent, will at last overtake us. And when our design'd Destruction approaches us step by step, and every succeeding Judgment brings it nearer and nearer to us ; so that we plainly see it coming on when 'tis yet at a distance from us, and yet will not stand out of its way, but desperately meet, dare and defie it ; how can we charge God with being either unjust or unkind to us, who hath taken such an effectual Course to warn us of, and retrieve us from it ? When he thus punish'd us more and more, as our Sin grew greater and greater ; this, one would have thought, might have been sufficient to terrifie us from our Sins ; which, we plainly saw, were bringing such Mischiefs upon us ; and to forewarn us of that gloomy and fatal Issue that attended them. By all which, God doth abundantly manifest, how extreamly unwilling he is to destroy us. But if after all, we will force him to it, Men and Angels must confess, That he hath been infinitely just and good to us, and that the Guilt of our Blood lies upon our own Heads.

And if this be true, That when lesser Judgments will not reclaim Men, God's usual Method is to second them with greater ; how much reason have we of this Nation to expect and dread a Succession of greater Judgments than those we have hitherto felt ; considering how much we have degenerated under our past Corrections, and all along hardned our selves under the strokes of the Almighty ?

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I do not love to bode ill things : And did not our own Sins prognosticate more Mischief to us, than any of those suspected Appearances that fill our Heads with so many Fears and Jealousies ; I could easily secure my Mind of the Continuance of our Happiness under far more threatening Apprehensions. But alas ! when I consider, how obstinately we have persisted in our sinful Ways, in defiance both of the Mercies and Judgments of Heaven ; how, notwithstanding the Advantage we have had of being better, as having been baptized into the best Church, and educated in the purest Religion in the World ; a Religion that advances no Temporal Design, no Invention to enrich or aggrandize its Priests ; that hath no Aim or Project, but only that blessed one, of making Men good here, and happy hereafter ; that hath no Arts of Compromise between Mens Lusts and Consciences ; no Devices to supersede the Eternal Obligations of Piety and Vertue ; but binds them fast upon our Consciences, by all that we can hope or fear. When, I say, notwithstanding we had this Advantage of being good, by being instituted in such a Religion as this, I consider how we have grown worse and worse, as if we had resolved to give the World an Experiment how bad it's possible for Men to be under the most effectual Means of being good ; I cannot but be fearful and jealous, That our multiplying our Guilts, will at length provoke God to multiply his Judgments upon us. And O would to God, that for this reason we would all be jealous ; that we would ground our Fears upon our Sins, and Incurribleness under the past Judgments of God ! Then they would produce in us far different Effects from what they have hitherto done. Then, instead of firing us with Discontent against our Governours, and exciting us to Faction, Sedition and Clamour, they would turn all our Animosities against our own wicked Lives, which are the Causes of all the Evils that we feel or fear : Then would our Fears and Jealousies improve into Piety towards God, Loyalty towards our Prince, and Charity and Justice towards one another ; and render us constant to the Profession, and faithful as to the Practice of our Holy Religion. Which blessed Effects could they once produce, then farewell to all Causes of Fears and Jealousies : Then our God would soon disperse all the Clouds that hang over us, with the Light of his Countenance ; and render us a glorious, a happy, and a prosperous People, and crown us with everlasting Glory and Happiness hereafter.

SER-

SERMON VIII.

PREACH'D

At the Funeral of Sir *John Buckworth*, at
the Parish-Church of *St. Peter's Le Poor*
in *Broadstreet*, December 29. 1687.

ECCLES. xi. 8.

*But if a Man live many Tears, and rejoyce in them
all; yet let him remember the Days of Darknes,
for they shall be many.*

I Shall not trouble you with the various Rendrings of these Words; which (with a very little difference) do all amount to the same Sense, viz. That supposing it should be a Man's good Fortune to live very long, and exceeding happy in this World; yet he ought to have great care, that the Joys of this Life do not so wholly take up and engross his Thoughts, as to make him forget those *Days of Darknes*, which must e're long succeed this delightful Sunshine: Which *Days* will be *many* more, and of much longer Continuance than the longest Life of Happiness we can promise our selves in this World. So that all the Difficulty in these Words, is, what we are to understand by the *Days of Darknes*, which are here opposed to a long Life of Joy and Rejoycing in this World. And this Difficulty will be easily resolved, by considering the foregoing Verse: *Truly the Light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the Eye to behold the Sun.* Upon which it follows, *But if a Man live many Tears, i. e. supposing he should for many Years enjoy this pleasant Spectacle of the Light of the Sun; yet let him remember those Days of Darknes wherein his Eyes shall behold the Sun and Light no more; wherein he shall be laid up in a dark and silent Grave, whence the Light of the Sun is excluded, and where the Sight of the Eyes is extinguished; or, as he expresses it in the third Verse of the next Chapter, wherein those that look out at the Windows, are darkened.* So that we shall have neither *Visible Objects*, nor *Visive Organs*; but be buried out of sight in deep Darknes and Insensibility.

By the *Days of Darknes* therefore, is evidently meant, all that Space of Time between our Death and our Resurrection; wherein our Bodies shall lie mouldring in a dark Grave, utterly insensible of Good or Evil; till by the powerful Call of God, they shall at length be rouzed up out of this Fatal Slumber, into a State of Everlasting Life and Activity: And *these Days*, saith he, *shall be many*; tho' they shall not run out to an infinite Duration, but at length conclude in a general Resurrection; yet they shall *be many*, many more, in all Probability, than any Man now alive, can hope to live in this World.

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The Words thus explain'd, resolve into this Sense ; That how long and happily soever Men live in this World, they ought to entertain their Thoughts with frequent Remembrances and Considerations of their approaching Mortality. Which is a Duty so obvious to the Consciences of all Men, as being founded on the plainest and most conspicuous Reasons, that the Men of all Ages, and Nations, and Religions, have own'd and acknowledged it. Thus the Heathen Philosophers teach, That our Lives ought to be a constant Meditation of Death ; and that even in our most pleasant and healthful Moments, we ought to look upon our selves as Borderers upon Eternity ; That we should still take care to mingle our Delights with the sad Remembrance of our Mortality ; and not suffer the Joys of this Life to divert our Thoughts from that impending Fate, which e're long will set an everlasting Period both to Them and That. But the Necessity of entertaining our Minds with frequent Remembrances of our Latter End, is founded upon far more powerful Motives than a Company of fine Sentences, and pretty Sayings of Philosophers. For.

First, It is necessary to moderate our Affections to the World.

Secondly, It's necessary to allay the Gayety and Vanity of our Minds.

Thirdly, It is necessary to put us upon improving our present Enjoyments to the best Purposes.

Fourthly, It is necessary to fore-arm our Minds against the Terroures of Death.

Fifthly, It is necessary to excite and quicken us in our Preparations for Eternity.

I. It's necessary to moderate our Affections to the World. While we are encompassed round with the Fleasures and Delights of this World, they commonly so ingross our Minds, that we shut our Eyes against all Futurities, and are impatient to think of any thing to come, unless it be the Continuance of this happy Scene of things which is at present before us ; with which Continuance we are exceeding apt to flatter our selves, that so thereby we may heighten the Guilt of our present Enjoyments ; to which the Consideration of their leaving us, or our leaving them, would be apt to give a very ungrateful Farewel : And when our Thoughts are wholly intent upon these present Goods, and upon the Prospect of their Continuance, our Affections must necessarily run out towards them with an immoderate Ardour and Greediness. For now our flattering Imaginations represent them to us as standing and permanent things, as a kind of immortal Heaven upon Earth ; and accordingly, our Affections pursue and embrace them as the best of Goods, and are for dwelling upon them, and building Tabernacles in them, there to make their final Abode, as in their highest and ultimate Happiness. Now there is no more effectual way to rouse Mens Minds out of this flattering Dream of Happiness, (from which, if they persist in it, the dire Experience of a woful Eternity will e're long awake them) than frequently to entertain their Minds with the Thoughts of their Departure hence. For when I set myself seriously to think of my dying Hour, *that* fairly represents to my deluded Mind, the true State and Condition of all worldly Happiness. Here I plainly see, that I am a Tenant at Will to a thousand Contingencies ; in every one of whose Power it is to turn me out of the World, and out of my Happiness together, every Moment of my Life ; and that when I have erected this childish Castle of Cards, and housed my self in it, as in an imaginary Fortrefs of impregnable Security ; it is in the Power of every Puff of Wind to blow it down about my Ears, and bury me in its Ruins. In every serious Prospect of my Mortality, I behold all my worldly Enjoyments, which promised me such Mountains of Happiness, standing round my Death-Bed, mocking at all my foolish Hopes, and exposing my baffled Expectations to Scorn and Derision : And whilst in the Anguish of my Soul, I cry out to them, O ye helpless impotent Things, what are now become of all your boasted Comforts ? You that promised to be a Heaven

upon Earth to me, why do not ye now help me in this my last Extremity ? Why do not ye quench my raging Thirst ? Why do not ye cool my feverish Blood ? Why do not ye ease my labouring Heart, and quiet my convulsed and tormented Bowels ? All the Answer they return, is this ; Alas, poor deluded Fool ! 'tis not in us to relieve or succour thee. But what, will ye then forsake and abandon me ? and shall I have nothing left of all the mighty Goods you promised, but only a Grave, a Coffin, and a Winding-sheet ? Alas, poor deceiv'd Wretch, we leave not thee, but thou must leave us ; being summoned away by a fatal Power, which we can neither bribe nor resist : Thy Body must go down into a cold dark Grave, and there lie utterly insensible till the Resurrection ; thy Soul must pass into the Region of Spirits, whither we are not permitted to follow thee, and where thou wilt have nothing to live upon to all Eternity, but only the Graces and Vertues of thy own Mind. Farewel then, ye treacherous Cheats and Impostors, that promised so much, and now perform so little : Miserable Comforters are ye all, and Physicians of no Value. Such Thoughts as these the Remembrance of our Mortality will be frequently suggesting to us ; and if such Thoughts do not cool and allay the Heat of our Affections to the World, we are incurably fond of being deceiv'd and abused by it.

II. Frequently to remember our Departure hence, is very necessary to allay the Vanity and Gayety of our own Minds. Whilst we are encompassed with the Delights of this World, our Minds are generally too frolick and jovial to admit of any serious Impressions : And if at any time any good Thoughts come in to visit us, (as those two Angels did *Lot* in *Sodom*) to warn us of the dire Fate that hangs over us, our Affections, like the drunken *Sodomites*, are presently all in an Uproar, and will never be quiet, till those unwelcome Guests be thrown out that disturb their Riots, and mingle harsh Discords with our jovial Airs : And so long as we continue in this light vain Temper, there is nothing will be grateful to us, but frothy Mirth, or loose Company, or gay *Idea's* of our selves, and of our own Wit, or Wealth, or Beauty, or Finery. And thus we shall fool away our Lives in perpetual Vanity and Impertinence ; in rolling about from Vanity to Vanity, and never be Serious till we are forc'd to do it by some woful Experience. But now to fix such a roving and volatile Temper, and thereby to render it accessible and hospitable to wise and good Thoughts, I know nothing more necessary, than the frequent Remembrance of our Mortality : For as for the future Worlds of endless Joy and Torment, though they are in themselves the most serious things in the World ; yet being both Future and Invisible, vain and sensual Minds are not so capable of apprehending them with that degree of Certainty, that is necessary to render them affecting and prevalent : But that we must die, we are all as certain of, as of our present Existence ; and therefore this, if any thing, must move and affect us. If therefore, together with those gay *Idea's* that possess our Minds, we would ever and anon mingle that of our Mortality, that would soon reduce our squander'd Thoughts, and make us serious in despite of our Teeth. As for instance ; when in thy Night-Thoughts thou art priding thy self in the Pomp and Splendour of thy outward Condition, think thus with thy self : Alas ! within a little while this Bed which now is as gay, and as soft as the Sleep, and the Sins it entertains, must be my Death-Bed ; here I must lie a languishing sad Corps, which nothing in this World can help or ease : So that though now I should go on to add House to House, and Lands to Lands, even till I am become the Lord of all my Horizon ; yet in that sad Hour all these will be no more able to relieve me, than the Landskip of them upon my Walls, or my Hangings : Then may I as successfully go to my Pictures, and try to entertain my Mirth and Luxuries with them, or to recreate my Ear with hearkning after painted Sounds, or to gratifie my Palate with the Image of a Feast, as to give my self any Ease or Content with these gay things I am now so proud of. And when at length, I have groaned away my Fleeting Breath, I must be remov'd from all my Company and Attendance, into a dark, lonely, and deso-

desolate Hole of Earth, where all my present Pomp must expire, and be overcast with everlasting Death. Again, when in the Morning thou art entertaining thy Vanity with thy Beauty, thy Wit, or thy fine Cloaths, think thus with thy self; Alas, fond Soul! All these gay Objects of thy Pride must e're long, convert to Rottenness and Corruption; that curled Forehead must be bedew'd with clammy Sweats; those sprightly Eyes must wax as dim as a sully'd Mirrour; that charming Voice must grow as weak as the faint Ecchoes of a distant Valley; and all those Lilies and Roses on thy Cheeks must wither into the Paleness of Death, and shroud themselves in the Horrors of the Grave. Again, when in the Afternoon thou hast been entertaining thy self with Mirth, or Sport, or Luxury, go down into the Charnel-House, and there survey a while the numerous Trophies of victorious Death: In these *ghastly Mirrours* thou beholdest the true Resemblance of thy Future State. Forty Years ago that naked Skull was cover'd, like thine, with a thick Fleece of curled and comely Locks; those *empty Holes* were fill'd with *Eyes* that look'd as charmingly as thine; those *hollow Pits* were blanch'd with *Cheeks* that were smooth and amiable as thine; that *grinning Mouth* did smile as gracefully, and speak as fluently as thine; and a few Days hence thou must be rotting into just such another Spectacle; and forty Years hence perhaps, here may thy *naked Ribs* be found mingled with these *scattered Bones*: And then should another take up thy bald Skull as thou dost this, he will find it dress'd in all the self-same *Horrors* of this *Death's Head*; with its Nose funk, its Jaws gaping, its Mouth grinning, and *Worms* crawling in at those *empty Holes* wherein now thy *Eyes* rowl in *amorous Glances*; and a Toad perhaps engendering in that Brain that is now so full of *sprightly Thoughts*, and *gay Idea's*. If with these, or such like *Considerations* of Mortality, we would now and then entertain our selves, they would by Degrees wear off the Levity and Vanity of our *Minds*, and compose us into such a Degree of *Seriousness*, as is necessary to qualify us for those *Divine* and *Religious Considerations*, without which we can never expect, either to be made good Men here, or happy hereafter.

III. That we should frequently remember our Mortality in the midst of our most happy Circumstances here, is highly necessary to put us upon improving our present Enjoyments to the best Purposes, considering what Use the generality of Men make of the Enjoyments of this World. It is really a great Question, Whether it would not be much better for them, even in respect of *this Life*, to be without them, than with them. For either they shrivel them into *Miserableness*, or melt them into *Luxury*; the former of which *impoverishes*, and the latter *diseases* them. For if the former be the Effect of a Man's prosperous Condition, it *increases* his Needs; because before he needed only what he had not; but now he needs both what he hath not, and what he hath; his *covetous Desires* treating him as the Falconer doth his Hawk, still luring him off from what he hath seized, to fly at new Game, and never permitting him to prey upon his own Quarry. And if the latter be the Effect of his Prosperity; that is, if it *melts* him into *Luxury*, it thereby *wastes* his Health, to be sure, and commonly his Estate too: And so whereas it found him Poor and Well, it leaves him Poor and Diseased: And whereas it at first took him up from the Plough, it at last sets him down at the Hospital. And in general, while he is possessed of it, it only *bloats* and *swells* him; makes him proud and insolent, griping and oppressive; *pampers* and *enrages* his Lust, and *stretches* out his Desires into an insatiable Boulimy; sticks his Mind full of Cares, and his Conscience of Guilts: And by all these woful Effects inflames his Reckoning with God, and *treasures up Wrath* for him *against the Day of Wrath*. All which arises from the want of a frequent Remembrance of our Mortality. For did we but often ruminate upon this, that it is but a very little while that we have to enjoy the *Comforts* of *this Life*, and that within a very few *Years*, yea, perhaps, a few *Days*, we shall be stript of them all, and be sent as Nakedly out of this World as ever we came in: And when we are gone hence, of all the

Goods that we have left behind us, we shall have nothing to live upon to Eternity, but only the Good that we did with them, the Necessities that we reliev'd, the Oppressions that we eas'd, the Nakedness that we cloath'd, and the Hunger that we satisfy'd : These indeed will *follow after us*, and feed us with Content and Happiness to eternal Ages. But if we are destitute of these, we shall e're long be shipt off from all our present Enjoyments, and be landed in another World, upon a strange inhospitable Shore, and there be left miserable poor Wretches, without so much as one Drop of the Comforts we now enjoy, to satisfy our tormenting Desires, or to quench our still raging Thirst after *Happiness* : Then we shall with a thousand and a thousand times over, that instead of gratifying our *Luxuries* with the Mispende of our Wealth, or feeding our insatiate *Avarice* with the continual Increase of it ; we had, by doing Works of Piety and Charity with it, *made our selves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness, that so when we failed, they might receive us into everlasting Habitations*, and there entertain us with Pleasure and Delight for ever.

Well then, seeing that e're it be long, we must leave all these our present Possessions behind us ; it highly concerns us, while we enjoy them, to do all the Good that we are able with them : And seeing we are allow'd to carry nothing of them but the Good we do with them, along with us, to enrich and maintain us in our Eternal Condition ; by doing good with our Wealth, we shall convert and profelyte it, and make that an Offering, which others make an Idol ; we shall make this Earth Tributary to Heaven ; and in a much nobler Sense than the new System Astronomy teaches, advance it into a Star and a Celestial Body : By this we shall transmit it into the Eternal World, as it were, by Bill of Exchange, there to be repaid us ten thousand fold, in Glory, and Honour, and Immortality ; and ten thousand Ages hence, we shall be enrich'd with the Product of it, and receive a vast Revenue of Happiness from it for ever.

Suppose now, that you were a Merchant in a far Country, where you were allow'd for an uncertain time the Benefit of Free Trade and Commerce, in order to your gaining a good Estate to maintain you, whenever you should be forc'd to return to your own Native Soil : Would you be so indiscreet, as to lay out all the Product of your Merchandice in building Fine Houses, or purchasing great Farms, when you know not how soon you may be commanded to depart, and to leave all these immovable Goods behind you ? Or rather, would you not think your selves oblig'd by all the Laws of Interest and Discretion, to convert all your Gain into portable Wealth, into Money, or Jewels, or such movable Commodities, as when you depart hence, you might carry home along with you, and there be able to maintain your selves in many Years Ease and Plenty ? Do but think then, and think it often, that here you are Strangers and Foreign Merchants ; that you came hither from another World, to which you know not how soon you must return again ; that all the Wealth, the Houses and Lands, you gain by your present Commerce, are immovable Goods, which you must leave behind ye when ye go from hence ; and that there is nothing of them portable, but what you lay out in Piety and Charity ; and that therefore it concerns you, while you have Opportunity, to store and treasure up a plentiful Proportion of these, that so when you are Shipt off into the Eternal World, you may carry such an Estate of them thither with you, as may suffice to maintain you there in Glory and Happiness for ever.

IV. That we should frequently remember our Mortality, even in the midst of our most happy Circumstances here, is highly necessary to fore-arm our Minds against the Terrors of Death. Whilst we abound with the Injoyments of this Life, we are apt to put far from us the Evil Day ; and with the rich Churl in the Gospel, to promise our selves many Years Ease and Voluptuousness in this World : So that Death generally steals upon us before we are aware ; and like a Thief in a frightful Vizor, surprizes in the midst of a deep Security ; and after we have
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struggled with him a few Moments to no purpose, robs us of our Lives and our Happiness together.

And, O how terrible must Death be, when it approaches a Man under such Circumstances ; when the poor deluded Wretch hath been just Singing a soft *Requiem* to himself, *Soul, take thy Rest and Ease; thou hast Goods laid up for many Years*, and many Years to possess and enjoy them : For Death now to pronounce that fatal Sentence, *Thou Fool, this Night shall thy Soul be taken from thee* : Now, when he thought all was safe, and concluded himself secure of a long Lease of Life and Happiness : Now, before he hath given himself the Leisure, to think of his Dying Hour, or to fortifie his Heart with any wise or good Thoughts against the Terrors of this terrible one, that is just now brandishing its fatal Shaft at his Breast : How must it needs blank, and amaze, and confound him ? And what a trembling Horror must it strike thro' his Heart, to see himself thus unexpectedly hurried away, one Part of him to the Grave, and the other to Eternity ; now, when he thought himself so securely possessed of a long Enjoyment of the good Things of this Life !

Wherefore, as we should be fore-armed against the Terrors of Death, and enabled to abide his dreadful Approaches with a firm and constant Mind, it concerns us now, while we are surrounded with the Joys and Pleasures of this Life, to entertain our Minds with frequent Thoughts and Remembrances of him ; to retire now and then into a Charnel-House, and there to read Lectures to our selves upon the Skeletons and Deaths Heads, those Emblems and Representations of our approaching Mortality ; and from them to take such lively Pictures and Idea's of this King of Terrors, as may render his grim Visage and fearful Addresses more familiar to us, and give our Thoughts a more intimate Acquaintance with him, and with the Manner and Method of his Approaches ; with what an Army of Diseases he is wont to lay Siege to the Fort of our Life ; and how, in despite of all the Resistances of Nature, he plants and quarters them in our *Veins*, and *Arteries*, and *Stomachs*, and *Bowels*, and from thence *infests* us all over with continual Anguish and Pain ; how, when he hath tir'd and exhausted us with his continual *Batteries*, and worn out our Strength with an uninterrupted Succession of *wearisome Nights* to *sorrowful Days*, he at last *storms* the Soul out of all the *Out-works* of Nature, and *forces* it to retire into the Heart ; and how, when upon this last Retreat of Life, he hath marked us for dead, in a cold Baptism of clammy and fatal *Sweats*, he *summons* our weeping *Friends* together, to assist him in grieving us with their *parting Kisses*, and *sorrowful Adieus* ; and how at length, when he is weary of tormenting us any more, he *rushes* into our *Hearts*, and with a few *mortal Pangs* and *Convulsions*, tears the Soul from thence, and turns it out to seek its Fortune in the wide World of *Spirits* ; where it is either seiz'd on by *Devils*, and carried away to their dark *Prisons* of Sorrow and Despair, there to languish out its Life in a Dismal Expectation of that dreadful Day, wherein it must change its bad Condition for a worse ; or be conducted by *Angels* to some Blessed Abode, there to remain in unspeakable Pleasure and Tranquillity, till the great Day of its Coronation with a *glorious Resurrection*. If we would thus frequently survey our approaching Mortality in all the *Circumstances* and *Appendages* of it, we should hereby familiarize its Terrors to our *Minds* ; so that whenever it happens to us, our *Thoughts*, which have been so long accustomed to converse with it, will be much less startled and amaz'd at it ; and the often *Remembrances* we have passed upon it, will put us upon laying in such wise and good *Thoughts* and *Considerations*, as are best able to fortifie our *Minds* against it, and to inspire us with Courage and Alacrity under it.

V. and *Lastly*, Frequently to remmember our Mortality in the midst of our most happy *Circumstances* here, is highly necessary to excite and quicken us in our *Preparations* for Eternity. And hence it is, that we are so often called upon in this Militant Estate, to *Consider our latter End*, Deut. 32. 29. and by the *Examples* of the best Men, are invited, *So to number our Days, that we may apply our*
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Hearts unto Wisdom, Psal. 90. 12. and to wait till our Change comes, Job 14. 14. To which end also we are put in mind, that Here we have no abiding City. Heb. 13. 14. and that it is appointed for all Men once to die, Heb. 9. 27. and that Our Life is even as a Vapour that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away, Jam. 4. 14. And to this purpose the Apostle applies this Consideration, 1 Cor. 7. 29. 30, 31. Now this I say, Brethren, (i. e. of our uncertain Abode and Continuance here) (upon which he exhorts us to compose our selves to a great Indifferency as to the Things of this World) it remains, that they that have Wives, be as if they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this World, as not abusing it: for the Fashion of this World passeth away. i. e. Since your time here is so very short and uncertain, see, you endeavour before hand to loosen your selves from this World, and to put your selves into a fit Posture to leave it: For 'tis but a short Scene of Things, that will quickly be shifted, and then there will an Eternal State of Things succeed it. And indeed, since to die well, is the last Act and final Consummation of our Life, it must needs highly concern us, to arm and prepare our selves for it before-hand, lest we lose the Prize, by stumbling just at the Goal; and after a long Voyage, miscarry within sight of Harbour. For in the Hour of Death we throw our last Cast for an Eternity of Happiness or Misery: And how much are we concerned to throw that well, upon which so vast a Stake depends? O, my Brethren, it is a most serious thing to Die, to pass this dark Entry of Eternity, through which, as we go right or wrong, we are made or undone for ever: For to carry us right through, 'tis not a few Death-Bed Sorrows, or good Wishes; 'tis not a few extorted Promises, or forced Resolutions, or rack'd Confessions, and Lord have Mercy upon us: O, no; to die well, is an expensive Passage, which we shall never be able to defray, unless we carry along with us a very great Stock of Spiritual Preparations. We shall have need of a strong and active Faith, of a Mind well furnished with wise and good Considerations, of a deep, and large, and tried Repentance, of an unrestrained Charity, of a confirmed Patience, of a profound Submission to the Will of God, and a well grounded Hope of a blessed Eternity: For without all these together, we shall be very ill accoutred to Die, and run a fearful Hazard of miscarrying for ever. And these are such things as do not usually spring up like Mushrooms, in a Night, and much less in the disturbed Moments of a dying Hour; but do ask a much larger and serener Season to grow and ripen in. But if whilst we are entertaining our selves among the Joys and Pleasures of this Life, we banish from our Minds the Remembrance our Mortality, and look upon Eternity as a thing at a vast Distance, this will put us upon delaying and deferring our Preparation for it. For in this Temper we shall be apt to conclude, that we have time enough to come to begin and compleat our Repentance, and that we may safely indulge our selves yet a good while longer, in the free Enjoyment of our own Hearts Desires, and sin on at present upon this Security, that we will certainly Repent hereafter; and by this easie Train do Men toll themselves on through the several Stages of their Sin and Life, till they arrive at their Death-Bed; and then they begin to think of Repenting in good earnest. But then, alas! what will they be able to do, when their Thoughts are continually disturbed with the Care of disposing their Affairs in this World, and the frightful Prospect they have of the other? When their Minds are distracted with incessant Pain and Uneasiness; so that it is not in their power to consider so much as a Quarter of an Hour together? When through the Stupor and Indiposition of the Organs of their Reason, they are not able to range their scattered and unweildy Thoughts, into any of those sober Reflections and serious Meditations that are necessary to the forming of a sincere Repentance? In effect therefore, for Men to refer their Repentance to a Death-Bed, is the same thing, as to retire into a Battle to Meditate, or to set up a Closet to study Philosophy, in the Head Quarters of an Army; where most Men are as capable of free and undisturb'd Contemplations,

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as they are of Repenting amidst the Tumults and Hurries of a Death-Bed. And yet upon this dismal Extremity do Men commonly cast themselves, through their Neglect of remembering their approaching Mortality : Whereas, did they but often remember, and seriously reflect on it, they would as soon dare eat Fire, as defer their Repentance upon the uncertain Hopes of Futurity. For, alas, what is vain Man, that he should talk of Repenting hereafter ! When perhaps, while the Words are in his Mouth, the Earnest of Death is in his Hand, or Heart, or Bowels ; when, for all he knows, he may be inflam'd with a Fever with what he hath drank to day, or stifled with a Surfeit with what he shall eat to morrow ; when he may expire his Soul with his next Breath, or suck in his Bane with the next Air ; and so many unlook'd-for Accidents presently may put an End to all his Talk of Repenting hereafter, and render it impossible for ever ? Now of what dismal Consequence would it be, should I be thus surprized ; if while I presume upon my future Repentance, I am merrily sinning on, I should all of a sudden be hurried away out of the Company of my jovial Associates, into that of howling and tormented Spirits ; and from my Songs and Laughter, into Weeping, and Wailing, and Gnashing of Teeth ? How would it blank and amaze me, to think that ever I should be so mad, as to run such a desperate Hazard ? How dare we then talk of Repenting hereafter, when we consider, that it is not in our Power to command so much as one Moment of future Time ? When, for all that we know, the Hope of Eternity, which is now in our Hands, may be lost for ever, and drop through our Fingers before to Morrow Morning ? And that when we lie down at Night, and fall asleep securely in our Sins, we do not know but before the next Twilight we may awake with Horror and Amazement in Hell ? Let us seriously consider therefore, that the present Time only is in our Power ; and that as for the future, it is wholly in God's ; and that therefore, when we defer our Repentance to the future, we do, as it were, cast Lots for our Soul, and venture our Everlasting Hopes upon a Contingency which is not in our power to dispose of. For all we know, this may be the Evening of our Day of Tryal ; and if it be, our Life and Eternity depends upon what we are now doing. Wherefore it highly concerns us, by all the regard we owe to our Everlasting Safety, wisely to manage this last Stake, the winning or losing whereof may be our making or undoing. Thus will the frequent Remembrance of our Mortality put us upon laying in good Store of spiritual Provisions against that great Day of Expence. For he who often considers the great Uncertainty of Life, the dreadful Approaches, the concomitant Terrours, and the momentous Issues and Consequents of Death ; must be strangely stupified, if thereby he be not vigorously excited, to fore-arm and fortifie himself with all those Graces and Defences, that are necessary to render his Departure hence, easie, and safe, and prosperous.

And now, having done with the Text, I shall only crave your Leave to say a few Words upon this sorrowful Occasion ; viz. the Funeral of our common Friend, Sir *John Buckworth* ; who perhaps, while he lived, was a Person as eminently known, as ever any Merchant that trod the Exchange of *London*. And indeed considering the great Share he had of Intellectual Endowments, he was a Gentleman that seem'd to have been mark'd out by Providence, to make a considerable Figure among Men : For first, Nature had enrich'd him with a clear bright Mind, with a quick Apprehension, a prompt Memory, a steady and piercing Judgment, together with a natural Presence of Mind, and Fluency and Readiness of Speech, which enabled him, upon all occasions, easily to express his own Conceptions of things in a very clear and apt Language. All which Natural Endowments he had vastly improv'd and cultivated, by a long and curious Observation and Experience. For as Nature had fitted him for an Active Life, so Providence soon introduc'd him upon the Stage of Action. For as he was born a Gentleman, so he was educated a Merchant ; which perhaps is one of
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the most advantageous Academies in the World, to instruct the Mind in the Knowledge of Men, and the Management of Human Affairs. His Education furnish'd him with a fair Opportunity of seeing the World, as well abroad as at home; and of prying into the Intrigues of Commerce, and into the Manners and Interests of Men; whence he drew so many wise and useful Observations, as rendred him a Prince among Merchants, and an Oracle of Trade; insomuch that he was thought worthy to be chosen Deputy-Governour of that wise and great Company of the *Turkey* Merchants; and was perhaps as much consulted by his Superiors, about the Interest of the *English* Trade, and the Mysteries of Commerce, as any one Merchant of this City or Nation. Thus for his Intellectuals. As for his Morals, I believe, that all that knew him, will allow him this Character; That he was a Gentleman of great Integrity and Fidelity to his Trust; of exact Justice and Righteousness in his Commerce and Dealings: That he was a studious and successful Peace-maker; and great part of his Time, before he was called up by his Prince into a more busie and active Station, being spent in arbitrating Differences between Man and Man: In which he was so expert, so impartial and prosperous, that I am apt to think, he cemented as many broken Friendships, reconciled as many Quarrels, and adjusted as many Differences (which otherwise might have flam'd out into destructive Breaches) as most of those blessed Peace-makers that are gone before him.

Consider him in his respective Relations: And there all that knew him, I am sure, will allow him to have been a Faithful, a Loyal, and Useful Subject to his Prince, a kind and obliging Husband to his Lady, a tender and a wise Father to his Children, a prudent, careful, and benevolent Master to his Servants; and, in a word, a wise Counsellor, a faithful Friend, and a just and diligent Correspondent. As for his Religion, He was a hearty Protestant of the Church of *England*, which, upon mature Judgment, and upon thorow Information, he prefer'd, for the Loyalty of its Principles, the Simplicity of its Doctrines, and the primitive Purity of its Worship and Discipline, before all the Churches in the World: And what his Judgment was of our Church, he visibly express'd by his constant Attendance upon the publick Offices of our Religion upon the Lord's Day; from which he never absented, but when he was either detain'd by Sickness, or some very urgent unavoidable Occasion; and in which he always demeaned himself with all the profound Reverence, and Devotion that outwardly expresses a Mind inspired with a pious Sense of its Duty, and of the awful Presence of the great Majesty of Heaven.

Thus he liv'd: And as for his Death, though it was accompanied with all the Circumstances that could render a Man fond of Life, and make him loth to depart; though he had a plentiful Estate, a loving and beloved Wife, dutiful and hopeful Children, and these all of them dispos'd of, and happily settled in the World to his own Heart's Content; to leave all which at once, seems a very hard Chapter to a Mind not well resolv'd: Yet all these together had no such Effect upon him. Indeed, not long before his Death, though then in perfect Health, he seem'd to have a Boding of his approaching Fate: For having to his Heart's Desire dispos'd of his only Son in Marriage (who was the last of his Children undispos'd) he hath been often heard to say, *That now, he thanked God, his Business in this World was finish'd, and that it was high time for him to think of his Departure into another.* And when, soon after he was seiz'd with his last Sickness, he bore it with an invincible Courage and Constancy: And though the last Part of it was extremely painful to him, he underwent it without Complaint or Murmuring; with a Mind that seem'd entirely resign'd to the Sovereign Disposer of all Events. And when he perceiv'd the Approaches of Death, and found that he was going off the Stage of Mortals; he never shew'd the least Sign of Regret or Reluctancy; but took a solemn Leave of his Friends; and, which was much harder, of his

his dearest Relatives, who stood lamenting and weeping about him ; and this with a Mind very serious indeed, but in all Appearance, very calm and composed. And finally, he gave up the Ghost like a brave Man, and a good Christian ; with a firm and undaunted Mind, and as one that had plac'd his main Hope on the other side of the Grave ; and did expect to exchange an uneasy mortal Life, for an immortal one of Pleasure. And therefore, tho' I make no doubt, after all, but that, as a Man, he had his Faults (and he that hath none, let him cast the first Stone) yet, I am sure, he had his Vertues, and those, very eminent ones too : And therefore it will highly become us who survive, in Charity to cast a Veil over the one, and in Piety imitate and transcribe the other ; that so with him, and all our other Christian Brethren departed this Life in God's true Faith and Fear, we may have our final Consummation in Bliss and Glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *To whom, with the Father, and Eternal Spirit, Three Persons and One God, be ascribed all Honour, and Glory, and Power, and Dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.*

the most advantageous Academies in the World, to instruct the Mind in the Knowledge of Men, and the Management of Human Affairs. His Education furnish'd him with a fair Opportunity of seeing the World, as well abroad as at home; and of prying into the Intrigues of Commerce, and into the Manners and Interests of Men; whence he drew so many wise and useful Observations, as rendred him a Prince among Merchants, and an Oracle of Trade; insomuch that he was thought worthy to be chosen Deputy-Governour of that wise and great Company of the *Turkey Merchants*; and was perhaps as much consulted by his Superiors, about the Interest of the *English Trade*, and the Mysteries of Commerce, as any one Merchant of this City or Nation. Thus for his Intellectuals. As for his Morals, I believe, that all that knew him, will allow him this Character; That he was a Gentleman of great Integrity and Fidelity to his Trust; of exact Justice and Righteousness in his Commerce and Dealings: That he was a studious and successful Peace-maker; and great part of his Time, before he was called up by his Prince into a more busie and active Station, being spent in arbitrating Differences between Man and Man: In which he was so expert, so impartial and prosperous, that I am apt to think, he cemented as many broken Friendships, reconciled as many Quarrels, and adjusted as many Differences (which otherwise might have flam'd out into destructive Breaches) as most of those blessed Peace-makers that are gone before him.

Consider him in his respective Relations: And there all that knew him, I am sure, will allow him to have been a Faithful, a Loyal, and Useful Subject to his Prince, a kind and obliging Husband to his Lady, a tender and a wise Father to his Children, a prudent, careful, and benevolent Master to his Servants; and, in a word, a wise Counsellor, a faithful Friend, and a just and diligent Correspondent. As for his Religion, He was a hearty Protestant of the Church of *England*, which, upon mature Judgment, and upon thorow Information, he prefer'd, for the Loyalty of its Principles, the Simplicity of its Doctrines, and the primitive Purity of its Worship and Discipline, before all the Churches in the World: And what his Judgment was of our Church, he visibly express'd by his constant Attendance upon the publick Offices of our Religion upon the Lord's Day; from which he never absented, but when he was either detain'd by Sickness, or some very urgent unavoidable Occasion; and in which he always demeaned himself with all the profound Reverence, and Devotion that outwardly expresses a Mind inspired with a pious Sense of its Duty, and of the awful Presence of the great Majesty of Heaven.

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his dearest Relatives, who stood lamenting and weeping about him ; and this with a Mind very serious indeed, but in all Appearance, very calm and composed. And finally, he gave up the Ghost like a brave Man, and a good Christian ; with a firm and undaunted Mind, and as one that had plac'd his main Hope on the other side of the Grave ; and did expect to exchange an uneasy mortal Life, for an immortal one of Pleasure. And therefore, tho' I make no doubt, after all, but that, as a Man, he had his Faults (and he that hath none, let him cast the first Stone) yet, I am sure, he had his Vertues, and those, very eminent ones too : And therefore it will highly become us who survive, in Charity to cast a Veil over the one, and in Piety imitate and transcribe the other ; that so with him, and all our other Christian Brethren departed this Life in God's true Faith and Fear, we may have our final Consummation in Bliss and Glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *To whom, with the Father, and Eternal Spirit, Three Persons and One God, be ascribed all Honour, and Glory, and Power, and Dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.*

SERMON IX.

PREACH'D

*At Fulham, on Sunday, October 13, 1689,
at the Consecration of the Right Re-
verend Fathers in God, Edward Lord
Bishop of Worcester, Simon Lord Bishop
of Chichester, and Gilbert Lord Bishop
of Bristol.*

J E R. iii. 15.

*And I will give you Pastors according to mine Heart,
who shall feed you with Knowledge and Understan-
ding.*

IT is at least, highly probable, that of those Ancient Prophecies which concern the Extent, and Purity, and Glory of our Saviour's Kingdom, there are several which as yet have never been accomplish'd : But that before the Consummation of all things, there is yet a time to come, wherein our Saviour will once more miraculously display the victorious Banner of the Cross, and go forth conquering and to conquer, till he hath consummated his Victories in a glorious Triumph over all the Powers of the Earth : Wherein he will come with his Fan in his Hand, and thoroughly purge the Floor of his Church, from all that Chaff of Superstition and Idolatry, Schism and Heresie, Irreligion and Immorality, with which it is yet, and hath for many Ages, been spread, and almost cover'd : In the room of which, the truly ancient Faith, the sincere Piety, the unaffected Vertue, the open, generous, and unbounded Charity, which Christianity teaches and prescribes, will be the universal Livery and Cognizance of the Christian World. And, as an Introduction to this glorious State of things, it is foretold, that God will raise up in his Church, a great many Pastors and Teachers, eminent for Learning and Wisdom, Piety and Vertue, who by the Efficacy of their Doctrine, the Sanctity of their Lives, the Prudence of their Conduct, and the unwearied Activity of their Zeal for God, and the Good of Souls, will greatly contribute to this Glorious Work of the Conversion of the Heathen, and the Reformation of the Christian World : For this God promises in the Text ; *And I will give you Pastors after my own Heart, &c.* And that this Promise refers to this future Glorious State of the Church, is evident : For it is made to the *Jews* upon their Restoration from their last and great Dispersion ; as you may see from v. 12. to the Text : Which Restoration of theirs, the Scripture represents as the Opening and Introduction of this glorious Face of Things.

Be-

Before we proceed to the main Argument of the Text, it will be necessary to enquire, who are here meant by *Pastors*? *Pastors* properly signifie Feeders of Flocks, and Herds of Beasts; and more particularly, Shepherds, or Feeders of Flocks of Sheep; and these the Scripture usually expresses by the Hebrew *Rogim*, which generally signifies Pastors of Beasts; but metaphorically, it signifies Rulers and Teachers of Men; who in Scripture are most commonly expressed by the Hebrew *Parnasin*, which is the Word in the Text. For thus in Scripture, not only God himself, the Ruler and Teacher of the World; not only Jesus Christ, the great King and Prophet under God the Father; but Kings also, who are God's Vicegerents, are frequently stil'd Pastors and Shepherds: In which last Sense, sundry Expositors will have the Words understood in the Text, *I will give 'em Kings and Princes according to my own Heart*. But besides Kings, this Title in the Scripture is frequently given to Spiritual Rulers and Teachers: Thus *Isa. 56. 10, 11.* the *blind and Ignorant Watchmen*, by which all Expositors understand, the Ecclesiastick Governours and Teachers are call'd *dumb Dogs, and Shepherds that cannot understand*. So also *Jer. 50. 6.* *My People have been lost Sheep, their Shepherds have caused 'em to go astray, i. e.* Their Prophets and Teachers have mis-guided 'em: And so in sundry other Places. And in the New Testament the very Office of Bishops and Teachers, is frequently describ'd by feeding the Flock of Christ; and the Apostle, enumerating the several Orders of Ministers which Christ had instituted in his Church, mentions among 'em *Pastors and Teachers*, *Eph. 4. 11.* which Title of Pastors seems to have been deriv'd from the Jewish Synagogue, in which there were three *Parnasin*, or Pastors, whose Office it was to Rule and Teach, to administer Justice to the People, and to instruct 'em in the Law; and accordingly, by *Pastors*, all Christian Antiquity understands Bishops and spiritual Guides and Teachers; whom all Ecclesiastical Writings frequently dignified with this Stile of Pastors: And in this latter Sense, *viz.* of Ecclesiastical Rulers and Teachers, I conceive the Word *Pastors* is more peculiarly meant in the Text; where it is said, that these Pastors should *feed 'em with Knowledge and Understanding*; that is, according to the most natural Signification of the Words, shall instruct you in the true Knowledge of God, and of Religion, according to that of *Mal. 2. 7.* *The Priests Lips should keep Knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his Mouth; for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts.* Though I confess, the Words may import no more than — *Who shall rule you with Prudence and Discretion*; as it is said of David, *That he fed the People of Israel according to the Integrity of his Heart, and guided them with the Skilfulness of his Hand*, *Psal. 78. 72.* But this latter Sense being more forc'd and critical, we ought, according to the most known Rules of Interpretation, to prefer the former, which is most natural; and then by *Pastors* here, must be understood the spiritual Rulers and Teachers, *viz.* the Bishops and Presbyters of the Church, whose peculiar Office it is to instruct the People, in the Knowledge of God and of Religion. So then, that which God here promises, is this, That he will very much advance and raise the State of his Church in the latter Days: For so *v. 16, 17, 18.* *In those Days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord; neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.* For then shall their Ceremonial Worship be utterly abolish'd, of which the Ark of the Covenant was a Principal Part; and they that worship, shall worship in Spirit and in Truth. And then he tells 'em, *at that time they shall call Jerusalem the Throne of the Lord, and all the Nations shall be gathered unto it, in the Name of the Lord to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the Imagination of their evil Heart: and in those Days the House of Judah shall walk with the House of Israel, and they shall come together out of the Land of the North, to the Land that I have given for an Inheritance to their Fathers.* Which glorious Things, being yet for the most part unaccomplish'd, must be reserv'd for future Ages. And in Order to the Introduction of this State,

of things, God promises, that he will give 'em spiritual Guides and Pastors after his own Heart, &c.

The Words thus explain'd, necessarily import this Proposition, which shall be the Subject of the ensuing Discourse ;

That such spiritual Guides and Pastors as are according to God's own Heart, do very much conduce to the Glory, and Beauty, and Perfection of the Church. In prosecution of which Argument, I shall endeavour,

I. To shew what those Qualifications are which render Men Pastors according to God's own Heart.

II. In what respects Pastors so qualified, do conduce to the Glory, and Beauty, and Perfection of the Church.

I. *First*, We will shew, What those Qualifications are which render Men Pastors after God's own Heart. For God doth not approve nor disapprove of Men in any State or Capacity, out of a fond Respect or Partiality to their Person ; Persons, as such, are all alike, and indifferent to him : And it is only their Qualifications that do distinguish 'em in his Esteem and Affection. Now there are these three Qualifications necessary to render Men Pastors after God's own Heart :

First, Their being sent and commissioned by God.

Secondly, Their being thoroughly instructed in the Knowledge of God's Mind and Will.

Thirdly, Their being exemplary in their Conversation of the Goodness and Purity of their own Doctrine.

First, To qualifie Men for being Pastors after God's own Heart, it's necessary that they be sent and commissioned by him : For such as are God's Pastors, do act in God's stead, and are his spiritual Vicegerents in the Church ; and hence they are said to *pray Men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God*, 2 Cor. 5. 20. And as Christ is stiled the Supreme Shepherd under God, the Sovereign Pastor of the Church ; so they under Christ are stiled *the Overseers and Shepherds in the Flock, to feed the Church of God*, Acts 20. 28. and their Office is *to feed the Flock of God, and to take Oversight thereof*, 1 Pet. 5. 2. And as Christ was his Father's Ambassador to the World ; so they are stiled *the Ambassadors of Christ*, 1 Cor. 5. 20. And seeing by their Office they act in the stead of Christ, as Christ doth in the stead of God, and are his spiritual Proxies und Substitutes in his Kingdom ; it is necessary they should be commission'd by him : Otherwise, instead of being his Under-Shepherds, they are Thieves that break into his Fold, and there usurp his Power and Authority. And accordingly you find, that in the very same Sense that Christ was sent from the Father, that is, as his Authorized and Commission'd Minister, to act for him, and in his stead ; the Under-Pastors of his Flock were sent by Christ : *As the Father sent me*, saith he, *so send I you* ; that is, as my Commissioned Ministers, to act for me, and in my stead, John 20. 21. And to shew, that this was the Intention of his sending 'em, he tells 'em, *he that beareth you, beareth me* ; because you speak from me, and I by you ; *and he that despiseth you, despiseth me* ; and *he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me* ; because you, by virtue of this my Mission, represent me, even as I, by virtue of my Father's Mission, represent him, Luke 10. 16. And as he sent 'em to act in his stead, and by his Authority ; so in sending 'em, he transferr'd upon em all the Powers of his own Mission from the Father ; in which is included the same Authority to send others, that he had to send them ; that so they might derive their Mission to others, as I e did his to them, through all succeeding Generations. For unless by sending them he gave 'em the same Authority to propagate their Mission to others, as his Father gave him to propagate his Mission to them ; how could he truly say, that he sent them as his Father sent him, since he must have sent 'em without that very Authority from his Father, by virtue of which he sent them ? And this, it's plain, the Apostles did believe, was included in their Commission ; seeing without any other Authority, at least, that we know of, they after-

afterwards proceeded to Ordain and Commission others ; and thereby to impower them still to derive the same Commission to others, and so on in a continued Succession to the End of the World ; as is evident by innumerable Instances in the New Testament, and especially in those two famous Ones of *Timothy* and *Titus*, the first Bishops of *Ephesus* and *Creet*. Thus Christ ordain'd the Apostles the first Bishops, and these ordain'd their Collegues and Successors ; and so through the Episcopal Hands, have the Holy Orders been all along derived, in a continued Succession from one Generation to another ; as is notorious, not only from all Ecclesiastical History, but even from St. *Jerom* himself ; (*Ep. ad Evagr.*) who, though sometimes, out of a Peculiar Pique, endeavours to level Bishops, with Presbyters, is yet fain to do it with an *Exceptâ Ordinatione*. Seeing therefore our Saviour hath thus intailed his Mission from God upon all succeeding Pastors of the Church, and taken such care to consign it down to all future Ages ; I think, it is a plain Case, that they who intrude themselves into the Pastoral Office without it, at least, where it may be had, are so far from being Pastors after God's own Heart, that he looks upon 'em as so many lawless Usurpers and Invaders of his Authority.

Secondly, To qualifie Men for being Pastors after God's own Heart, it's necessary, that they should be thoroughly instructed in the Knowledge of God's Mind and Will : For their Office is to be Guides of Souls ; And how should they be Guides to others, who know not the Way themselves ? *If the Blind lead the Blind, saith our Saviour, both shall fall into the Ditch* : And accordingly, God charges the Ruin of his People upon the Ignorance of the Priests ; for which he threatens to reject 'em : *My People are destroyed for lack of Knowledge : because thou hast rejected Knowledge, I will reject thee, that thou shalt be no Priest to me*, *Hos. 3. 6*. And 'tis a dreadful Charge he gives against the ignorant Priests of *Israel* ; *His Watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant, they are all dumb Dogs, they cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber, and they are Shepherds that cannot understand*, *Isa. 56. 10, 11*. But as for the Pastors after God's own Heart, a main part of their Character, according to St. *Paul*, is, that they be *apt*, or fit to *teach* ; which they cannot be, till they themselves be first taught and instructed, *1 Tim. 3. 2*. 'Tis true, indeed, when the Gospel lay hid in the Eternal Counsels of God, it was necessary that he should immediately reveal it to the Minds of those who were to declare it to the World : Otherwise it is impossible it should ever have been known to Mankind. But when once he had thus revealed it to them, and declared it by them, and had transmitted their Declaration by a standing Scripture, to all succeeding Generations ; to what end should he still proceed to make new Revelations, unless it be supposed, either that he had not sufficiently revealed his Gospel to them, or that he hath still some new Gospel to reveal ? For otherwise, to continue immediate Revelation, would be only *actum agere*, to multiply Actions to no purpose, unless it were to gratifie Mens Sloth and Idleness, and excuse 'em from the Trouble of searching and studying the Scripture, in which he hath sufficiently transmitted his Mind and Will to the World. But though God will never be wanting to Mankind in any necessary Assistance ; yet when once he hath put things within our own power, he expects we should do 'em ; and not sit still with our Hands in our Pockets, expecting that he should do 'em for us. Since therefore by transmitting to us the Scripture, he hath put it within the Power of the Pastors of the Church to understand and teach his Mind and Will ; he expects they should exercise that Power in a diligent Study of those things which lead to the understanding of it, and not depend upon new Revelations for the understanding of those things which are already sufficiently revealed. For thus, till the Old Testament was finish'd, God continu'd the Spirit of Prophecy in the *Jewish* Church ; after which he immediately withdrew it, and wholly remitted his People to the Conduct of the Priests and Levites ; who in their forty eight Cities, which were so many Universities for their Education in divine Learning, diligently read and studied the Law, and thereby accomplished themselves to preach and explain it

to the People. And in like manner, God continued the same Spirit of Prophecy in the Christian Church till the New Testament was revealed and written, and Copies of it dispersed through all the Churches; and from thenceforth the Spirit of Prophecy ceased, and in the room of its first inspired Ministers, there succeeded an ordinary standing Ministry, who by their Learning, and Industry, and diligent Search of Scripture, were to supply the Defect of immediate Revelation, and to qualify themselves to teach and instruct the several Flocks committed to their Charge: In order whereunto, a very large Compass of Knowledge is required; it being not sufficient for 'em simply to know and understand the several Articles and Propositions of Religion; but they must also be able to deduce from 'em their just and natural Inferences, and be furnish'd with proper *Mediums* to assert and prove 'em, and with strong and powerful Persuasions, to press and enforce 'em upon the Minds and Consciences of the People. For which end it's necessary, that they should be instructed, not only in the Art of Reasoning, but also in natural and revealed Theology, and in moral Philosophy; that so they may be able to explain the particular Offices of Piety and Divine Worship, and the Natures of the particular Vertues and Vices they exhort to, and dehort from; and to enforce 'em with the eternal Reasons of Good and Evil: But above all, it's necessary, that they should be well acquainted with the Holy Scripture, that great Oracle of Truth, which from God's own Mouth declares his Will to the World: And that in order to this, they should be competently Skilled in the Original Languages, in the History, and Rites and Customs of the Ages wherein they were writ. And seeing it is the Pastor's Office, not only to propound, but also to assert and maintain the holy Truths of Religion, (which through the vast Multiplication of Errors and Heresies, are, and have always been very hardly beset) to accomplish him for this part of his Office; it's highly requisite, that he should be well acquainted with the true States of Controversies, with the History of Christian Theology, and of the Rise and Progress of the several Errors and Heresies with which it hath always been opposed, so as to be able to trace up those poisonous Streams to their Fountain-Heads. I do not say, that all these things are necessary to render Men Pastors after God's own Heart: For I make no doubt, but a good Man that thoroughly understands his Religion, may with a little Learning, do a great deal of Good, and be able at last to render a comfortable Account of the Charge committed to him. But certainly, to render a Man a Pastor accomplished at all Points, and for all Parts of his Office, requires a very large and comprehensive Knowledge.

Thirdly and lastly, To qualify Men for being Pastors after God's own Heart, it's necessary, that they should be exemplary in their Conversations, of the Goodness and Purity of their own Doctrine: And indeed, this is so necessary, that without it, the two former are of little Significancy in the Esteem of God: 'Tis this alone indears the Man to God: And how well soever he may be authoriz'd to his Office, or accomplished in his Intellectuals, unless the Man be approved of God, the Pastor can never be according to God's own Heart. And indeed a good Life is so necessary to qualify Men for the Pastoral Office, that without it, it's hardly conceivable how they can ever be successful in the discharge of it. For the generality of the People understand with their Eyes, and believe with their Senses: If they see us live as if we believed our own Doctrine, they will believe it too; but if not, they will be apt to conclude, that we see no ground to believe what we teach them; and from thence to infer, that there is none; seeing if there were, one would think, it is impossible, but we, whose Business it is to study Religion, should easily see and find it. Thus when Pastors openly contradict in their Lives, what they teach with their Mouths, they thereby unteach their own Doctrine, and in effect tell their People, it is all an ungrounded Imposture; and that even Religion it self, how zealously soever they seem to contend for it, is in their Opinion, a mere Castle in the Air, that hath no Foundation,

dation, but only in the Invention of Knaves, and in the Faith of Fools. Thus when the Vulgar behold Religion prostituted, by the hypocritical Professors of it, to base and unworthy Ends; this shocks their Faith more than a thousand Atheistical Reasons. They have seen shrewd and crafty Men use their Religion as Jugglers do their Boxes, for no other end, but only to play tricks with it, and delude and cozen the simple and well-meaning: And hence they first suspect, and at last conclude, That it is only a politick Device contrived for secular Ends and Purposes. Of the truth of which the Age we live in is a sorrowful Instance: For, to scorn and despise Religion, is now no longer the Prerogative of Wits and Gallants; but the Infection is spread and propagated into Shops and Stalls; and even among the Rabble there are Apostles of Atheism and Impiety: And whence should this proceed? Is it to be supposed, that such as these Philosophize themselves into Infidelity? That these found their Atheistical Principles upon the sage *Hypotheses*, either of *Epicurus* or *Aristotle*? O, no, their Argument lies near home, and more open to their Capacities; they have seen a World of base Tricks plaid under Religious Disguises, which tempts 'em to conclude, that Religion it self is nothing but a Trick and Disguise. But when they see those who are the Ministers of Religion, live in a direct Opposition to those very Laws of it, which they themselves prescribe and teach, the most natural Inference of it is, That they minister to Religion for no other end, but to make their Fortunes, and gain a good Subsistence by it; and consequently, that they look upon Religion it self as nothing but a Secular Trade. And while we give the People such reason to suspect that we do not believe our own Doctrine, how can we expect that they should believe it, who are far less capable to judge of the Reason and Evidence upon which it is founded? Wherefore it was not without very great reason, that *St. Paul* exhorts his Son *Timothy*, to be an Example to the Believers, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity, 1 Tim. 3. 12. where you have the Particulars, in which more especially Pastors ought to be Examples to others; 1. In Word. 2. In Conversation. 3. In Charity. 4. In Faith. 5. In Spirit. 6. In Purity. Of each of which I shall Discourse very briefly.

1. In Word; that is, as I conceive, in observing a decent Gravity in Discourse: For just before, the Apostle had advised him so to behave himself, as that no Man might despise his Youth; and in order to that, that first of all, he should be exemplary in Word; that is, that his Discourse should not be as Young Mens use to be, vain, or light, or scurrilous, or prophane; but that it should be well poised between the vicious Extrems, so as neither on the one hand, to be over youthful, gay and frolick; nor on the other, to be sour and morose, starchy and formal: Which latter, though it may take with less discerning People, will render a Man suspected, by those who look farther than the Outside, either of great Emptiness, or vile Hypocrisie: Whereas a Decent Openness and Freedom of Discourse, mingled with Seriousness, gives it both Charm and Authority, by which it profits and delights together, and entertains the Mind with a cheerful Education. So that by observing a decent Gravity in our Discourse, we stamp a graceful Majesty upon what we say, which at once pleases, instructs, and awes those that hear us.

2. In Conversation, which *Grotius* renders in sweet and obliging Deportment, to carry our selves at an equal distance, from Contempt and Haughtiness on the one hand, and Sneaking and Glavering on the other; both which, in the Judgment of all Discerning Men, render us equally Mean and Contemptible. For to contemn another, is to behave ones self above ones self; and to sneak to another, is to behave ones self beneath ones self: And for a Prince to cringe, or for a Peasant to insult, are equally ridiculous. But he who in his Conversation observes a just Equality, (so as neither to be too assuming, nor too prostrate; that treats his Inferiours and Equals courteously and affably; and his Superiors and Equals with a modest Freedom and Assurance) shews himself both a wise and an humble

humble Man, that understands the just Value both of himself and others ; and by such a just Demeanour, he can hardly fail of obliging all he converses with ; but only such, as either under-value him, or over-value themselves.

III. In *Charity*, that is, in an hearty good Will and forward Beneficence to all Men, as we have opportunity ; in being ready to supply 'em in their Necessities, to counsel 'em in their Difficulties, to assist 'em in their just Pretensions, to put fair Interpretations on their Actions, to bear with their pitiable Prejudices, to make just Allowances for their Infirmities, to pity their Follies and Miscarriages, and use all gentle means to reclaim 'em ; to be long suffering under their Provocations, and gentle and easie to be entreated. These are the great Acts of Charity, in which Pastors ought to be exemplary to the People : And being so, they will take the most effectual Course, not only to propagate this excellent Grace to others, which includes the one half of Religion ; but also to erect themselves a sure Empire in the Hearts of their People : By which powerful Interest, they will be much more effectually enabled to subdue 'em to the Obedience of the Gospel ; which is the great End of their Profession.

IV. In *Spirit*, that is, in an active and sprightly Zeal for the Glory of God, and the good of Souls ; such as renders 'em industrious in their Pastoral Office, in feeding, governing and instructing the Flocks committed to their Charge. For certainly, it for Men to be diligent in their Callings, be a Part of their Religion ; for Pastors to be diligent in theirs, is a main Part of their Religion ; there being no Calling in the World wherein Religion is so nearly concerned, and upon which Religion lays so much Strefs, and charges so severe an Account. For so St. Paul tells us, that the Pastor's Office is *to watch for the Souls of Men* ; and that his Charge is *to give an Account for 'em*, Heb. 13. 17. And certainly, he whose Office it is to watch over so rich a Treasure, as the Souls of Men, and whose Burthen is to give an Account, at his own eternal Peril, for all that are lost through his Negligence, had need be very active and diligent, in the Discharge of so vast and Dangerous a Trust.

V. In *Faith* ; that is, as I suppose, in an immovable Constancy and Fidelity to our Religion, in holding fast the Form of sound Words, and contending earnestly for the Faith that was once delivered to the Saints ; not induring either to be hufft or wheedled out of the Profession of Truth. For as Christians, we take up our Religion, with this Condition, to die for it, rather than to part with it : But as Christian Pastors, Christianity it self is more peculiarly recommended to our Care, to be preserv'd intire and inviolable ; and as such to be handed down, by us, to the Generations to come. So 1 Tim. 6. 20. O Timothy, *keep that which was committed to thy Trust* : Which elsewhere he thus expresses ; *hold fast the Form of sound Words*, or the true Christian Faith committed to thy Charge, 2 Tim. 1. 13. And in order to his so doing, he charges him not only to be careful to preserve it himself ; but also *to commit it to faithful Men* ; that is, to faithful Pastors, who should be careful to teach it to others also, 2 Tim. 2. 2.

Thus God delivered in trust his holy Mind and Will to the Primitive Pastors, by them to be handed down intire and pure to their Successors ; and so on through all succeeding Generations : And because he foresaw, that it would necessarily contract Soil and Corruption, by being delivered down through so many impure Hands ; therefore he hath bequeathed to us the holy Scripture for a standing Rule, whereby each succeeding Generation might be able to reform the Profession of it, from the Errors and Corruptions which it should contract in its Passage down from the Generations before 'em.

And thus hath Christianity been derived down to us of this Generation. viz. By the constant and courageous Profession of all the preceding Pastors of the Church, regularly reform'd by the Rule of Scripture, from the Corruptions it had contracted in its Descent through the Ages before us. And as we owe our Christianity to the constant Profession of preceding Pastors, many of whom have
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sent it down to us, sealed with their Blood ; so we owe the Delivery of it, by our constant Profession of it, down to succeeding Generations : In which if we fail, we are not only false and perfidious to the most sacred Trust that ever was committed to Men ; but so far as in us lies, we stop the Current of our Holy Religion down to succeeding Ages ; and do our best Endeavours to intercept this Heavenly Light, which hath shone down to us from our Predecessors, from shining down from us upon our Successors.

VI. And *Lastly*, Another Excellency wherein *Pastors* are to be exemplary, is, in *Purity* ; that is, in abstaining from all fleshly Lusts, from Worldly-mindedness, Intemperance and Wantonness : For the great Design of the Religion we teach, is, to abstract and wean Men from Sense and sensual Enjoyments ; that thereupon they may acquire a sincere Relish of Divine and Spiritual Goods, which are the great Entertainments upon which they must live for ever ; that so, when they leave this World of sensual Things, they may carry hence with 'em such grateful Pretensions, and Foretastes of the Joys and Pleasures of the Spiritual World, as to be able to live contented with and happy upon 'em to Eternal Ages. And this being the great Design of the Religion we profess and teach, we are peculiarly concerned to teach it by our Example, as well as by our Doctrine : Otherwise, 'twill be thought by those that hear us, that we persuade them to a Spiritual Life, for no other End, but only to get the Monopoly of Sensual Enjoyments to our selves. Wherefore, in order to the advancing this great Design of our Religion, it's necessary, that by purifying our selves from sensual Lusts, and by the Example of our Heavenly-mindedness, we should endeavour to convince our People, That we do not place our Happiness in the Gratifications of our Sense ; but that we look upon our selves as born to higher Hopes, and that our great Expectation is beyond the Grave.

Having thus dispatched the first thing I proposed, which was to shew, what, or who those Pastors are, that are according to God's own Heart ; I shall touch very briefly upon the second, *viz.*

II. How much such Pastors do conduce to the Glory, and Beauty, and Perfection of the Church, as such, principally consists in the following Particulars :

First, In Soundness of Faith.

Secondly, In Purity of Worship.

Thirdly, In Vigour of Discipline.

Fourthly, In Unity of Communion and Affection.

Fifthly, In Sanctity of Manners. To all which, such Pastors as are according to God's own Heart, do very greatly conduce.

First, In Soundness of Faith : To which, there is nothing can more conduce, than Pious and Learned Pastors ; who being not only purged from those vicious Affections, which are wont to seduce Men into Errors and Heresies ; and not only inspir'd with an hearty Zeal for Truth ; but also accomplish'd with Parts and Learning to distinguish between Truth and Falshood ; and to separate the Innovations of false Teachers from the Ancient Truths of Christianity, cannot but be highly instrumental to the restoring the Faith of their Churches, wherever they find it corrupted and sophisticated, to its Primitive Lustre and Simplicity.

Secondly, In Purity of Worship : For the End of all Church-Assemblies being to worship God ; and the Worship of God consisting in a devout Acknowledgment of the infinite Perfections of his Nature, by such internal and external Acts, as right Reason and Revelation directs ; to be sure, all such as are truly devout, and sincerely affected with the Divine Perfections, must look upon themselves as greatly concerned to worship God, in such manner as is most suitable to his Will and Nature ; that so, instead of making an honourable Acknowledgment of his Perfections in their Worship, they may not seem to ridicule and disgrace them.

And this the Pastors of the Church are more peculiarly concerned in ; who being the Guides and Directors of the publick Worship, must, if they are truly

Pious, be very jealous of the Worship of God. to see it maintained in, or restored to its Primitive Purity and Perfection: And consequently, if they are Judicious as well as Pious, and can distinguish between True Worship and False, to be sure, where they find it True and Pure, they will use their utmost Endeavour to preserve it so; and take all possible care, that it be neither defaced with Superstition, nor blended with Idolatry for the future: And where they find it hath contracted Rust and Corruption, will be no less solicitous to restore it to its native Lustre.

Thirdly, A Church's Glory and Perfection consists also in the Vigour of its Discipline, in the just and vigilant Administration of the Power of the Keys, in admonishing such as go astray, in excluding them the Communion of the Church if they continue obstinate, and re-admitting them upon their Repentance: Which Power our Saviour committed to the Hands of his Apostles, and was from them derived to the Bishops their Successors, as a Spiritual Rod, to chastize and reduce those straggling Sheep of their Flocks, upon whom the gentle Methods of Religion should prove ineffectual: And in those purer Ages of the Church, wherein this Power was maintained in its due and regular Exercise, and it was not prostituted to serve Human Passions and Secular Ends, it very rarely failed of its designed Effect. And to this Day, in the *Greek Church*, where the Spiritual Censures are administered, though with great Corruption, by those in whose Hands our Saviour and his Apostles deposited it; there is no Corporal Coercion whatsoever so tremendous to the People, as that of Excommunication; and this not without just Reason.

For if Men have any Reverence for the Authority of Christ, or any Dread of his Tribunal; doubtless, to be justly excluded from his Kingdom upon Earth, and from the Privileges and Communities thereof, by those whom he himself hath empower'd to exclude, must, in their Esteem, be the next Degree of Punishment to their being actually excluded from his Kingdom in Heaven. Whenever therefore, this Power falls into the Hands of such Bishops and Pastors, as do not only apparently derive it in a Lineal Succession from our Saviour; but will also take care to administer it with Prudence, Equity and Justice; the Dread of it must needs be a mighty Influence upon the Lives of all such Christians as have any regard to the Authority of God, and our Saviour.

Fourthly, A Church's Glory and Perfection consists in Unity of Communion and Affections; so that there be no Schisms in the Body; but that all its Members being incorporate in the same Communion, be knit and fastened to one another by the Ligaments of mutual Love and Charity: To which excellent Effect there is nothing in the World can more conduce, than Learned, Prudent and Pious Pastors; who, by wisely stating the different Opinions upon which Men divide, will set them nearer together; and in many Cases reduce the Controversie to a mere Quarrel about Words: Who, by prudent Expedients, will so adjust and temper the different Interests of differing Parties, as to render them fairly consistent: Who, by the Gravity of their Discourse, and the Integrity and Obligingness of their Behaviour, cannot fail to win themselves into the Esteem and Affections of both Parties; whereby they'll be the better enabled to sweeten and influence their mutual Animosities, and to reduce them to a better understanding of one another. In a Word, who by their Gentleness to the forward and peevish, their Condescension to the innocently prejudic'd, and their honest Moderation to all, will be continually pouring a soft and healing Balm into the bleeding Wounds of their Churches; and, if it be possible, so effectually mediate between the divided Parties, as at length to unite 'em in the same Communion, and cement their divided Hearts and Affections.

Fifthly, and *Lastly*, The Glory and Perfection of a Church, consists also in Sanctity of Manners: To promote which also, nothing can be more conducive than Pastors according to God's own Heart. For, First, their being commission'd from God, in a continu'd visible Succession from our Saviour, to teach and govern his Flock, must give their Doctrine a very great Authority in the Minds of all that

that have any Reverence for God, and thereby render it more prevalent and effectual: And then their Doctrine, supposing they are Pious and Learned, will be throughout holy, and in all points tending to promote the Interest of Piety and Vertue: And above all, their holy Doctrine will be back'd and enforc'd by their holy Examples, which will preach more effectually than their Tongues. For whereas Precepts and Discourses of Vertue, are only the dead Pictures and artificial Landscips and Descriptions of it; a vertuous Example is Vertue it self in order'd and animated, alive and in Motion, exerting and exhibiting it self before our Eyes, in all its natural Charms and Graces. And therefore, as we know a Man much better when we see him alive and in Action, than when we only see his Picture, so Vertue and Piety are much better understood, and better lov'd by Men, when they see 'em living and acting in holy Examples, than when they only hear 'em describ'd and pictur'd in *Vertuous Precepts and Discourses*. When therefore their *Pastoral Authority*, their *Doctrine* and *Example*, shall all conspire to advance the Interest of Piety and Vertue in the World; to be sure, they must have a powerful Influence upon the Lives and Manners of Men.

What then remains, but that you, the Right Reverend and Reverend *Pastors* of the Church, in whose power it is, to do such a World of good, make it your great Endeavour to approve your selves *Pastors* according to God's own Heart. Blessed be God, our Church hath hitherto abounded with such *Pastors*, as have not only been sent forth by Bishops, who in an uninterrupted Succession, have derived their Authority to send 'em, from the Apostles, as they did theirs from our Saviour (and hitherto, God be praised, our Church hath known no other) but have also been as renown'd for their Learning, and profound Science in Religion; and as conspicuous Examples of true substantial Piety and Vertue, as any that any Church in the World can boast of: And by the great Earnest he hath this Day given us, of his kind Intentions for the future, we have Encouragement to hope, that he will not only continue, but multiply them, and still more and more improve the Glory of our Church, by giving her more and more *Pastors* after his own Heart; that so, under their wise and pious Conduct, she may not only continue what she is, *viz.* by many Degrees the best and purest Church in the World; but may still encrease in Strength, and Beauty, and Perfection; and that she that hath born the Shock of so many angry Storms, may still stand firm, like a Rock of Adamant, against the noise Billows that are driven against her, and still force 'em to retire in empty Foam and Fury; till by their vain Attempts they have wearied themselves into smaller Waves, and are at last compos'd into a Calm. For which End, *Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that the Course of this World may be so ordered by thy Governance, that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all Godly Quietness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

SERMON X.

PREACH'D

At the Funeral of Sir *John Chapman*,
Lord Mayor of *London*, at *St. Lawrence's*
Church, *March 27, 1689.*

ECCLES. vii. 1.

----- *And the Day of Death, than the Day of
ones Birth.*

IN the former part of this Book, the *Preacher* treats of the many false Ways Men take to their own Happiness; and now he comes to describe the true Way and Method of attaining it. In general, he all along supposes, that the best State of Happiness in this World, is exceeding imperfect; and that therefore, in order to our being in any measure happy, it is necessary we should not expect more from things, than their Nature and Circumstances will afford; but content our selves to take Men and Things as we find them: The former, with all their Uncertainty and Inconstancy; the latter, with all their Faults and Miscarriages; since it is not in our power to alter their Nature, and render them as we would have them.

And as for the particular Directions he gives, they are reducible to this General, That in order to our being in any Degree happy in this World, it is necessary we should change our Mind, and Thoughts, and Opinions of Things; and embrace some such Propositions, for the truest and most indubitable Maxims, which we have hitherto look'd upon as the wildest *Paradoxes*; namely, That *Mourning* is in many Cases to be preferred before *Feasting*, V. 2, 3, 4. *Rebukes* before *Commendations*, V. 5, 6. The *End*, or final Issue of Things, before the *Beginning*, V. 8. A *patient* and *constant* Indurance of Injuries and Affronts, before a *peevish* and *haughty* Mind, V. 9. *Wisdom* before *Riches*, V. 11, 12. And to name no more, That a good Name, is better than precious Ointment; and the Day of Death, than the Day of ones Birth, as you have it in the Text.

I shall not trouble you with any Account of the Connexion between these two Comparisons, *A good Name is better than precious Ointment; and the Day of Death is better than the Day of ones Birth*: The latter of which I have chosen for the Subject of my ensuing Discourse, *The Day of Death is better than the Day of ones Birth*: Which, though it may seem a very odd Paradox at first View (to Men who place all their Hopes in this Life, and act as if all the Consequents of their Death were as indifferent to them, as the Antecedents of their Birth) is yet a very apparent and momentous Truth: A Truth, that hath not only Evidence enough in it to challenge our Belief; but also Moment enough to be one of the Principles of our Practice: Nor is it the peculiar Sentiment of our *Preacher*; for,

as *Valerius Maximus* tells us, (2. 6.) The whole Nation of the *Thracians*, which justly challenged the Praise of Wisdom, was wont to celebrate the Birth of Men with Mourning, and their Death with Joy; and this they did without being instructed by Teachers, purely upon their own Observation of the State and Circumstances of Human Life. And accordingly *Euripides* proposes this Custom to the World as just and reasonable,

Τὸν φῦτα θρηνεῖν ὅς' εἰς ἔρχεται κακὸν,
Τὸν δ' αὖ θανόντα καὶ πόρον πεπαισμένον
Χαίροντας εὐφημῶντας ἀπὸ μὲν δόμον.

i. e. To lament those that are born, upon the account of the many Evils, among which they enter at their Birth: But when they die, and rest from their Labour, to celebrate their Funerals with Rejoycing and Praises: All which proceeds upon the Truth of this Maxim, That the Day of Death is better than the Day of ones Birth. For the Proof of which, it will be needful to consider our Birth and Death under a three fold Notion, or Respect:

I. Simply as an Entrance into, and Exit out of Human Life.

II. As an Entrance into a Vicious and Impenitent Life here, and an Exit into a miserable Life hereafter.

III. As an Entrance into a Pious and Vertuous Life here, and an Exit into a happy Immortality hereafter. In all which Respects and Considerations, I shall endeavour to shew, That our Death is preferable before our Birth and Life.

I. We will consider our Birth simply, as an Entrance into Human Life; and consequently our Death, as an Exit out of it: For Birth and Death are the two Boundaries of the Race of Human Life: The former is the Post from whence it starts, the latter the Goal at which it stops; and as thus consider'd, Death is preferable upon three Accounts.

I. Upon the Account of the Evils from which it delivers us.

II. Upon Account of the Goods in which it instates us.

III. Upon Account of the Hopes and Fears arising from both.

I. Upon account of the Evils from which it delivers us: For Life consider'd barely in it self, or under the simple Notion of Self-Activity, is neither good nor evil; but only as it is the Principle of our Sense of Good and Evil. A Plant hath Life as well as we; But its Life being wholly insensible, it's never the better or the worse for it; because it neither perceives any Good, nor feels any Evil in living. To those Creatures therefore that have Sense with Life, it is good or evil for them to live in proportion to the Goods and Evils which they are sensible of, and do feel and perceive. If they are sensible of more Good than Evil, it's good for them to live; but if they perceive more Evil than Good, it's evil for them to live. If therefore it be made appear that Human Life hath generally more Evils than Goods, more Pains than Pleasures in it, our Reason may justly pronounce what *Jonas's* Passion did, That it is better for us to die than to live. And that this is our Case, is evident by too many woful Experiments. For from those very Seeds of Mortality that are sown in our Natures, there spring up an infinite Number of Diseases, that frequently render our whole Life a continu'd Torment to us. Sometimes we are drown'd in Dropsies; sometimes scorched with Fevers; sometimes torn with Catarrhs, and Phthisicks; sometimes rack'd with Gout, or Stone, or Strangury: To day we are weary; to morrow hungry, or thirsty, next Day either pinch'd with Cold, or smother'd with intemperate Heat. Now we are tortur'd with some acute Disease; anon we are forc'd to torture our selves for prevention. Thus Griefs, and Troubles, and Diseases twist them-

themselves about our Life, as the Ivy about the Oak, till they have exhausted all the Sap of it, and caused it to wither away, and die. But yet it must be own'd, That though there is no Happiness in this Life, so pure, but what hath a great deal of Alloy and Intermixture; nor none so blessed, as to be totally exempt from Pain, and Crosses, and Disappointments; yet it cannot be denied, but that Providence hath a great many Favourites in this World, who spend the greatest part of their Lives in Ease and Pleasure; and for every painful Moment they endure, are compensated with a thousand Joys, and Satisfaction. *There are no Bands in their Death, as the Psalmist expresses it, but their Strength is firm: they are not in trouble like other Men, neither are they plagued like other Men. Their Eyes stand out with Fatness, they have more than their Heart could wish. These are they who prosper in the World, and increase in Riches, Psal. 77.* Now as for such as these, Life indeed is highly desirable; because it entertains them with far more Goods than Evils; But these alas! seem privileged from the common Fate of Mortals; and therefore the Psalmist might well say, *They are not plagued like other Men:* For considering how many there are that consume their Lives in perpetual Toil and Drudgery, and have no other Reward for their many Hours Labour, but a short hungry Meal, and a few Hours Sleep and In-sensibility! How many that are oppressed with Slavery, harass'd with Cruelty, pin'd with Want and Poverty, overwhelmed with Shame and Infamy, that are wasted with long Sickneses, outworn with lingering Pains, consum'd with Vexation, Sorrow and Anxiety of Soul; that are stung with Remorse, rackt with Horror and Despair, alarmed with perpetual Fears and dismal Expectations; I doubt, all these put together, into one Number, make the much greater part and generality of Mankind. And though to many of these miserable ones the Divine Providence indulges frequent Intervals of Ease, Satisfaction, and Pleasure; though it spices and sweetens their bitter Cup with some grateful Intermixtures, to make the nauseous Draught of Life go down with them more easily; yet whenever they compare the few Goods they enjoy with the many Evils they suffer, and equally balance their Pleasures with their Pains, their Hopes with their Fears, their Successes with their Crosses, and their Enjoyments with their Disappointments; I make no doubt, but they will find the latter turn the Scale, with a great deal of Overweight: And when the Evils of Human Life do thus surmount the Goods, and its Sense is oftner impress'd with Pain than with Pleasure, it's a plain Case, That Death is a Release and Deliverance.

II. If we consider our Birth simply as an Entrance into this Life, without any respect to another, Death is preferable to it upon account of the Good in which it inflates us. 'Tis true indeed, Human Life hath its Pleasures, as well as its Pains; but these, alas! in their Variety, are so scanty and few, that a very short time suffices us to make a through Experiment of them all: And when we have done this once, all our following Pleasures are nothing but dull Repetitions of the same things. For the main of the Pleasures of Human Life are transacted within the short Space of Twenty four Hours: So that in almost all the rest of our Age, we do nothing else but only tread the same Stage over and over, the same Enjoyments always returning within the same Compass of time. So that after we have been entertain'd a few Years with nothing but the same returning Pleasures, our Appetite to 'em is quickly cloy'd, and at length we rise from 'em with Loathing and Satiety: But then, alas! in all this narrow Circle of Pleasures, the greatest part is little else but a mere Privation of Pain and Misery; and 'tis not so much a positive Good that pleases us, as the Removal of some afflicting Evil. Thus Ease and Rest are only so far pleasing to us, as they remove our Pain and Weariness: For when these are remov'd, the Pleasure is over, and in a little time we are weary again of our Rest and Ease, till Pain and Weariness return and sweeten 'em, and give them a new and grateful Relish. And so when we are weary of Rest, we are fain to recreate our selves with Action; and when we are weary of Action, we are fain to refresh our selves with Rest, and so round and round again in the same Circle. Thus Eating and Drinking are only so

so far pleasant to us, as they assuage the Pain of our Hunger and Thirst; and when this is remov'd, the Pleasure ceases; and till it returns again upon us, we cannot eat or drink with Pleasure. So again, the Pleasure of Health consists in not being Pained or Diseased; the Pleasure of Recreation, in being diverted from the Toil and Hurry of Business. And as for the phantastick Pleasure Men take in Heaps of Wealth, Heights of Preferment, and Puffs of popular Applause, there is very little real in it, beyond a mere Privation of the Miseries of Want, Scorn and Infamy. Thus, most of the Pleasures of Human Life, are only so many short Reprieves from the Griefs, Troubles, and Displeasures of it, so many Intermissions of its Pains and Diseases. And the main of all our Happiness here consists in not being sensible of Misery; of which, if we had never liv'd, we had never been sensible; and when we die, we shall never be sensible more; that is, supposing Death to be an utter Extinction of all Life, both here and hereafter, which is the Notion under which I am now considering it: And then, whereas our present Indolence, or Insensibleness of Misery, is at best but partial and imperfect, (for to our profoundest Ease there always clings some uneasy Circumstance; our highest Pleasures have always their appendent Stings, and our sweetest Gusts their bitter Farewells.) Death inflates us in a perfect Insensibleness, and cures us at once of all Diseases: When we go down to make our Beds in the Dust, there we sleep on in an intire Indolence; there are no Midnight Qualms, no convulsive Starts or melancholy Dreams, to discompose our Rest; but all is hush and still, soft and quiet round about us; *There the Wicked cease from Trouble, as Job expresses it, there the Wearied are at rest, there the Prisoners rest together; they hear not the Voice of the Oppressors, the small and great are there, and the Servant is free from his Master, Job 3. 17.* Seeing therefore that Death renders us intirely insensible of Pain and Misery; and the best of Life, even the Pleasure of it, is little else but a Nonperception of Pain, and that a partial one too; it hence follows, That Death consider'd in it self, and without respect to the Consequence of it, is really preferable to Life.

3. Death is also preferable to Life, upon account of the Hopes and Fears arising from the Goods and Evils in both. For if there be no Good to be hoped for in this Life, which is not reasonably to be expected in Death: If there be no Evil to be dreaded in Death, which is not more to be dreaded in Life, then 'tis plain, that Death is preferable before it. But, I beseech you, what great good doth your Hope propose to you in living? Is it that you may pamper your Lusts, and entertain their Voluptuousness a little longer? The Meaning of which is no more than this, That you may appease the Rage of your own Desire with a short Enjoyment that will but the more inflame them; and that when they are more inflam'd, you may appease them again with the same Enjoyment; that is to say, you would fain be eas'd from the importunate Cravings of an insatiable Appetite, from which, when all is done, there is nothing will perfectly ease you, but a Mouthful of Earth; and that, by extinguishing the Appetite, will for ever satisfy its Craving, and then you will be perfect at Rest. For which is the greater Good, I beseech ye, never to hunger at all, or to endure the Pain of Hunger, only for the Pleasure of Eating? Doth not the Impatience of your Desire, which is a Pain, generally abide a great deal longer on your Appetite, than the Pleasure of Satisfaction? And do you not find upon an equal Comparison of both, that the Length of the Pain of your Desire, doth more than countervail the Pleasure of your Enjoyment? But now in Death all Desire ceases; and so, what you lose in being deprived of the Pleasure of Satisfaction, you gain with advantage, in being cured of the Pain of Desire. Or would you live, that you may get more plentiful Estates? The meaning of which is no more than this, That you would fain be farther removed from the want of the Necessaries and Conveniences of Life, and translate your selves to such a Distance from wretched Indigence, as that it never may be able to reach you: But this, alas! you can never hope to do, till you are translated into the Grave. For if you were never so rich, there are a thousand Accidents in this Life, that can strip and despoil you of all, and render you as
poor

poor and indigent as ever : But when you are dead, you are beyond all Want ; because you are beyond all Appetite and Desire : For they that have no Hunger, can want no Food ; and they that feel no Need, can need no Supply. Once more ; Would you live longer, that hereafter you may live more at ease, more free from Toil, and Labour, and Fatigue ? Alas ! poor Man, is it Rest thou seekest ? Go seek it in the Grave ; for there it dwells, not here. You strangely mistake, if you imagine, that there are any Circumstances here so easie, as to be totally exempt from Fatigue and Uneasiness ; but in the Grave, all is perfectly still and quiet : There are no Cares nor Fears, no Hurryings nor Scramblings no Jostling nor Countermining one another ; but all the once busie Actors are there hush'd into perfect Rest and Repose. Thus the main of all the Goods that we hope for in Life, are only to be found in Death. But then on the contrary, What great Evil is there that you dread in Death ? Is it that you must part from your Friends, and never enjoy their Conversation more ? And what then ? Are you not many times fain to part with your Friends here upon far worse Terms than Death ? How many Friends have you been forc'd to part with upon their Treachery and Falshood, upon their disingenuous Usage, barbarous Affronts, and unjust Provocations ? And how do you know but e're long you may be forc'd to part from the Friends you are now so loth to part with, upon the same Terms ? When you go to the Grave, indeed you will have no Friends to advise, or comfort, or assist ye. But then as you will have none, so you will need none : For as there are no Difficulties in the Grave, so there can need no Counsels ; as there are no Distresses, so there can need no Comforts ; as there are no Pretensions, so there can need no Assurances : And then, as you will have no true Friends to advise, or comfort, or assist you ; so you will have no false ones to abuse, agrieve and betray you : And to be deliver'd from *these*, is, I doubt, generally speaking, at least a sufficient Recompence for the Loss of *those*. But, O, when you die, you must leave the Company of Men, converse and talk no more, laugh and rejoyce no more ; but be laid up in everlasting Darknes and Silence. And what then ? As you will leave behind you the Society of Men ; so you will leave the Desire of their Society ; and what you cease to desire, you will cease to want ; and when you cease to want it, what harm will it be to be depriv'd of it ? But then, as you will be depriv'd of the Pleasure of Human Society, so you will also be deliver'd from the Trouble and Vexation of it : You will no more be griev'd with the Falshood and Treachery of it, no more be harass'd with the Follies, and Impertinencies of it, no more be teez'd with the Pevishness and Insolencies, the Discords and Wranglings of it ; but be for ever remov'd out of all the tedious Noise, and vexatious Tumults that attend it. And what if you cease to laugh, to rejoyce, and to be merry ? You will also cease to weep, and sigh, and groan ; and, I am apt to think, if you could so compound the Business of Life, as to part with all the Joys of it, to be discharged from all the Sorrows of it, 'twould be at least a saving Bargain. But, alas ! when you come to die, you must be sick, and in Pain, and undergo many a mortal Pang and Convulsion, before your tough Heart strings and Eye-strings will crack. This may be indeed, and it may not be : But suppose the worst ; Are there no Pains in Life, as well as in Death, no Aking of Head, or Gripping of Bowels ; no Tortures of Gout, or Stone, or Strangury ? I am sure, you, most of you, know the contrary by woful Experience : And, I am apt to think, that upon a just Computation, one Years Pains of the most easie Life you can hope to lead, will be found equivalent to a few Days Pain of the most uneasie Death. If then the Evils we fear in Death, are generally greater in Life ; and the Goods we hope for in Life, are to be found with greater Advantage in Death ; then certainly if we consider our Birth and Death, merely as our Entrance into, and *Exit* out of Life, it is, generally speaking, better to die than to be born.

II. And so I pass on to the second Notion, or Respect, under which we are to consider our Birth and Death, *viz.* as an Entrance into a wicked and impenitent Life

Life here, and an *Exit* into a miserable Life hereafter. The truth of it is, our Life and Death, consider'd merely in themselves, are Things so very indifferent, that they are Goods or Evils, Blessings or Curses to us, as we improve and make 'em : For it is only in respect to the happy or miserable Life beyond this, that to live or die, is a Good or Evil : If we live so here, as to entitle our selves to a happy Life hereafter, we hereby render our Life an inestimable Blessing to us : For besides that, by living Soberly, Righteously and Godly, and thereby intitling our selves to live happily for ever, we render our present Being far more easie and comfortable. Besides that, we escape the Pains and Diseases, the Vexations and Incommodities, to which vicious Courses do almost necessarily expose us ; and acquire a far more sincere and grateful Relish of the Pleasures and Comforts of this Life. Besides this, I say, we entail upon our present Life a future Reward so immense, as is abundantly sufficient to make us amends for all the *Evils* and *Calamities* of it : And upon these Accounts, and these only, it is, that the Prolongation of our Life is in Scripture represented and promised as a Blessing. But if, on the contrary, we so live here, as to entail upon our selves a Life of eternal Wretchedness and Misery hereafter, we render our Lives the greatest Plague and Curse to us. For how jovial soever our present Being may be, 'tis at best, but a short Comical Prologue to an everlasting Tragedy. And if we would escape all the Mischiefs that are naturally incident to Vice, and reap only the Pleasures ; yet 'twould be far better for us never to have lived at all, than to live happily for a few Moments, so as to live miserably for ever. If therefore our Birth prove only an Entrance to a wicked and impenitent Life, we have only one of these three things reasonably to wish for : *First*, That we had never been born ; seeing 'twould have been a thousand times better for us never to have been at all, than to be only in a tolerable Condition for a few Moments, and then to be miserable for ever. But since we are born, and 'tis in vain for us to wish, that what is, had never been ; the next Good we have to wish for, is, that we may never die ; seeing how undesirable soever our present Being is, it is certainly far more desirable than Hell ; and 'tis much better for us to lead a Life worse than Death, than to die into everlasting *Horror* and *Despair*. But since it is in vain for us to wish that we may live for ever here, it being *irrevocably* appointed for all Men once to die ; the next Reasonable Object of our Wishes, (that is, supposing we sin on, and never Repent,) is, that we may die quickly, seeing all the while we live, we shall but treasure up more Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and heat the Furnace of our Future Torment still hotter and hotter : For all the time we live here, supposing that we still live wickedly, we are only adding new *Items* to our Account, and inflaming the Reckoning of our future Punishment : And therefore unless we at length repent and amend, it were far better for us to die now, than to live twenty Years longer. For if we die now, we shall have much less to answer for, much less Guilt to expiate, and consequently, much less Punishment to endure. Whereas, if we live twenty Years longer, we shall but add twenty Years Sin and Impenitence to our Account ; which will make such a dreadful Addition to our Punishment, that all the possible Pleasures we can reap from our twenty Years Sin, will be infinitely short of making us amends for it. Wherefore considering our Birth as an Entrance into a wicked Life, and consequently our Death as an *Exit* into an eternally miserable one ; it is apparently better for us, seeing we must die at last, to die now, than to live.

III. And *Lastly*, We will consider our *Birth*, as an Entrance into a pious and vertuous Life, and consequently our *Death* as an *Exit* into an happy Immortality hereafter. The best thing in Human Life, is *Piety* and *Vertue* ; without which, it is all a mere Wilderness, an empty flat *Parentthesis* of Time, clasped in on either side with Eternity : But he who lives piously and vertuously, lives a Life worth the living ; a Life that e're long will terminate in a glorious Immortality. And to lead such a Life, is richly worth the while to be born : Because the End and Expiration of it, is only a *Second Birth* into an endless Life and Happiness. Upon which account, though a pious Life is of all others, the best

and most excellent Life ; yet is the Death that concludes it, far more eligible and advantageous, and that upon these Four Accounts :

- I. Because it puts us into a far better State of Health and Vigour.
- II. Because it inflates us in far better Enjoyments.
- III. Because it translates us to far better Company.
- IV. Because it fixes us in a far more certain and permanent Possession of all.

1. Because it puts us into a far better State of Health and Vigour. For though there is no doubt, but an exact Vertue and Regularity of Life, is a very great Preservative from many of the Diseases and Infirmities that are incident to Mortality, as well as a very strong Cordial to support us under them ; yet we find by woful Experience, that it is no Exemption from them, or infallible Antidote against them. The best Men have oftentimes but a very crazy Health, and do languish out their Days in a great deal of Pain and Uneasiness : And even in their most healthy and vigorous State, they have their sickly Intervals, their wearisome Days and sleepless Nights, their Gripes and Qualms, and painful Oppressions ; and a great part of their Life is so very grievous and afflictive, that 'twould be an Ease to them to be insensible : And, which is the worst of all, such is the Vital Union between their Flesh and Spirit, that they always mutually sympathize with each other ; so that whenever the one is weary, or sick, or pained, the other faints, and droops, and languishes : By reason of which, whenever their Body is indisposed, it is a Clog and Burthen to their Souls, that instead of assisting, hampers and intangles it in all its best and noblest Operations ; and even in the Exercise of her Religion (which, when she is free and vigorous, is incomparably the most delightful Sphere of Action) renders her dull, supine and listless.

Thus in this mortal State, we are well neither in Body nor Soul : And whilst this nimble and active Spirit within us, is confin'd to operate by these unwieldy Organs of Flesh, they will be more or less a constant Check upon its natural Vigour and Activity. But when Death shall part this ill-match'd Pair, and separate the Living from the Dead, the weary and heavy laden Soul will presently find her self strangely at ease : And being at once released from all the Incumbrances of this mortal State, and from all the Annoyances of Flesh and Blood, she will immediately feel the natural Strength of her own Legs and Wings, which before were hampered and benumn'd, and with *unspeakable Nimbleness* and *Alacrity*, mount up to the immortal Regions ; where being far remov'd out of the Noise and Participation of these bodily Passions and Grievances, she shall complain no more of a Cloudy Brain, or an Aching Head, of wearied Limbs, or Drooping Spirits, or Oppressed Bowels ; but shall live for ever in perfect Ease, Health and Vigour. If therefore it be better to be well than sick, to be at ease than weary, to be sprightly and vigorous, than dull and listless ; then certainly, it is incomparably better for a good Man, that hath a right to a better Life hereafter, to die than to live.

2. Because Death inflates us in far better Enjoyments than any this Life will afford. For in the highest Enjoyments of this Life, there is far more of Phantasy, than of real Good ; as is evident from hence ; because we always find, that our Imagination of Things is much bigger than our Enjoyment of them : And while we are in pursuit of them, we still fancy, we shall be much more happy in them, than we find our selves when we come to possess them. For such wretched Counterfeits are most of these outward Goods, that they will not bear the Test of a long Fruition : And how fair and big they may seem in the Eye of our Expectation, yet enjoying them, presently rifies and deflours them. The first Taste of them indeed, is commonly very grateful to us ; but after we have often repeated it, it grows flat, and after that, loathsome. When we have but little of what our Appetite craves, we are not contented, but still impatient for more : And when we have our Load of it, we loath it. So that
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in reality our Pleasures consist only in being restless, till we are weary ; and displeased, till we can feel no Pleasure. For till it hath pleased us, it is not a Pleasure ; and when it hath pleas'd us, it ceases to be so.

In short therefore, All that which we call *Pleasure* and *Happiness* here, is only a great and eager Expectation of Pleasure : For no sooner have we tasted the Objects of our Expectation ; but the Pleasure dies ; and so, like Bees in a Garden, we hum and rove about from Flower to Flower ; and as soon as we have tasted one, and exhausted its Sweetness, we leave it, and fly away to another ; thus seeking in vain to eternize our Pleasure by a continu'd Succession and Circle of Varieties. And now, methinks, after we have made so many Tryals of the Truth of all this, we should at length grow impatient of being still imposed on by the same repeated Imposture, and be weary of this Scene of Vanities, wherein we are thus perpetually tossed to and fro by our own unsatisfied Desires, thus distracted by the uncertain Motions of a ravenous Appetite, and thus endlessly bewilder'd by following the roving Dictates of a blind Imagination, that would fain be happy, but knows not how. But if you cast your Eyes beyond the Grave into that State of Life whereinto Death admits you, there you will find a far more satisfactory Account of things : there you will find Pleasures that will abide with your Palate, and well endure an everlasting Fruition, that will not wither while you are smelling to 'em, and die away in your Enjoyment of them ; but rather improve upon your Taste, and be growing eternally more and more relishing and grateful. For Heaven is but one continu'd Joy, one uninterrupted Sensation of Pleasure, which by pleasing grows more pleasant ; and the longer it is enjoy'd, the more it ravishes the Enjoyer. And whereas our present Pleasures, consisting in the vehement Motion of our material Sensories, are transient, and do quickly slip away, so that we must rest awhile before we can renew 'em and begin the Motion again ; those heavenly Pleasures are such as will indeed vehemently affect and move, but never weary the Faculties of the Enjoyer ; nay, will be so far from spending and weakening 'em, that they will more and more strengthen and improve 'em : For they are all of 'em Rational Pleasures ; and that which pleases true Reason once, pleases it for ever ; and still the more it is enjoyed, the more it pleases ; and where the Good that is enjoyed, is no less than God himself, who is not only a Rational, but an Infinite Good, it must do so. For in the Fruition of an infinite Good, which can never be fully enjoy'd by us finite Creatures, but in an Infinite Succession of Enjoyments ; every new Delight must raise a new Desire, and every new Desire find a new Delight for ever ; and so still the more we know of him, the more we shall love him ; and the more we love him, the more we shall rejoyce in him ; and the more we rejoyce in him, the more we shall know, and love, and rejoyce anew : And in this blessed Circle we shall move round for ever. Thus all the Enjoyments of our future Life are pregnant with eternal Pleasures ; such as, instead of being spent by Fruition, will to all Eternity be increased and multiply'd : And if this be so, then certainly, for such as are prepar'd for Heaven, and intitled to it, it is incomparably better to die, than to live ; seeing by Death they only exchange the mean and trifling, the imaginary and fantastick Enjoyments of this Life, for such as are vastly greater and better.

3. Because Death translates us to far better Company than any we can here converse with : For considering the Folly and Degeneracy of Human Nature, there is no great Good to be expected here from Human Society : But while we live among Men, we must be content with such Conversation as we find, and not always expect to find such as we would have. Sometimes we must be entertain'd with an empty, tedious Din of Impertinencies ; and either be content to bore our Ears to the Slavery of attending to it, or to be accounted rude, or proud and conceited : Sometimes we must bear with Passion and Peevishness, or live, like *Salamanders*, in the Fire of Wrangling and Contention : Sometimes we must ruffle with Insolence, or content our selves to be always abused, and born down by it : Sometimes we must guard our selves against Treachery and Falshood, and

converse with Caution, and Reserve, or be perpetually exposed to a thousand Snares and Mischiefs : Sometimes we must endure the nauseous Steam of fulsome Ribaldry, or, which is worse, the horrid Sound of Prophaneness and Blasphemy ; or else be hiss'd out of Company, as pragmatick Usurpers upon the Freedom of Human Conversation : Sometimes we must be plagued with the Serpentine Hissing, and poisonous Breath of Detraction and Calumny ; and sometimes be cruciated with the Malice and Impertinence of Backbiting and Gossiping, of base and false *Innuendo's*, sly and injurious Insinuations. We must sometimes see Malice and Treachery conducted under the Banners of Civility and Friendship ; pious Ends pretended to promote ambitious Designs ; Charity and Union extoll'd, to advance Revenge and Division, Zeal for publick Good, counterfeited only to serve private Passions and Interest ; all which are high Grievances to Men of Integrity and good Nature : Yet some, or all these things, we are fain to endure in most of our Conversations with Men. Here is Society indeed ! 'twould even provoke a wise and good Man, to cry out of it with the Prophet, *O, that I had in the Wilderness a Lodging-place of wayfaring Men, that I might leave my People and go from 'em ; for they are all Adulterers, an Assembly of treacherous Men ; they bend their Tongues like their Bows, for Lies ; but they are not valiant for the Truth upon the Earth. Take ye heed every one of his Neighbour, and trust ye not in any Brother ; for every Brother will utterly supplant, and every Neighbour will walk with Slanders, and they will deceive every one his Neighbour, and will not speak the Truth ; they have taught their Tongue to speak Lyes, and weary themselves to commit Iniquity.* Blessed Company this, for a wise Man to be fond of, or for the dear sake of it, to be unwilling to die ! especially considering to how much better Company Death introduces us, *viz.* into the Company of blessed Angels, and of the Spirits of just Men made perfect ; that is, into the Company of the most refin'd Spirits, the most wise and knowing, the most kind and benign, the most courteous and communicative, the most faithful and just, the most humble and meek ; in short, the most every thing that can render Company delightful and endearing : So that with them our Conversation will be a perpetual Intercourse of Wisdom and Love, Fidelity and Truth, without Jealousie or Design, Caution or Reserve ; but all frank and open, Heart with Heart, and Soul with Soul. O blessed Society ! where every one is a Friend to every one, and every Friend hath in him all the Accomplishments that can render a Friend an inestimable Jewel ; where all are happy to their utmost Wishes, and every one rejoices and shares in every one's Happiness. Here is Society indeed to our own Hearts desire ! Society worth dying for, and, which is more, worth living for for ever. And if such be the Society that Death lets us into, I leave any Man to judge, whether it be not much better for us to go away from hence, to leave this faithless, peevish, and ill-natur'd World, than to stay any longer, or converse any longer, like Briars with Thorns, where there is nothing but rending and tearing on both sides.

4. And *Lastly*, Because Death fixes us in a far more certain and permanent Possession of all. While we live here, how uneasily soever, we are still fond of living ; but still we know that ere long we must die, and leave all that is dear to us, upon Earth ; and the Prospect of that, many times, gives us more Trouble and Disturbance than Death it self. So that all the time we live, we are like those that live under the Pain and Torment of the Stone ; they know very well that they have but one Remedy for their Misery, and that is Cutting ; but this alas is hazardous and painful ; and therefore, though they must come to it at last, yet they are extremely unwilling ; they would fain have a little longer Respite from their Remedy ; and so they still groan on, and still endure not only the Pain of their Disease, but also the Painful Expectation of the future Incision : Whereas, had they been cut at first, perhaps they had been long since cur'd of both. Thus we, while we are lingering out this wretched Life, know very well, that we have but one Remedy, and that is Death : But oh, cry we, 'tis a grievous one ! and what then ? We certainly know, we must endure it at last ; but yet

yet we would fain live a little longer, that is, we would fain endure the Pain of living, and the painful Expectation of dying a little longer. Whereas had we now but the Patience and Courage to undergo the dreadful Operation, we should be released from both as soon as ever it is over, and in a few Moments, restor'd to eternal Health and Ease. And whereas while we live here, we are in a continual Flow and Reflow of things, at Ease this Moment, in Pain the next; rich to day, poor to morrow; now advanc'd to the Top of the Wheel, anon crush'd underneath it; and so insecure of every Good, that our Prospect of being depriv'd of it still imbitters our Enjoyments: Death translates us into an eternal Possession of all desirable Good, and sets us beyond the reach of both Time and Chance, in a State of Being and Happiness that admits no Change or Interruption; that is not to be measured by Hours, or Moments, by Years or Centuries, or Myriads or Indictions; but runs on in an everlasting Flux of Duration; every part whereof is equally, because infinitely, distant from a Period. For that Happiness, in which Death inflates us, being infinite, we shall always need as well as have, and always have, as well as need an Eternity of Fruition fully to enjoy it. So that during every present Moment of our Happiness, we shall feel our selves possess'd with eternal Ages of Happiness to come; and together with every Pleasure that we taste this Moment, enjoy the Foretaste of an Eternity of Pleasure; which will superadd an inconceivable Sweetness and Relish to it, and render it grateful and delicious, beyond all Imagination. Seeing therefore that Death only prefers us from an uncertain and slippery Possession of Goods, to a fixt and eternal one; if a continu'd Happiness be better than an interrupted one, and everlasting Joy than a Moment's Enjoyment; then certainly it must be better for us, incomparably better to die, than to live.

Having thus prov'd at large the Truth of the Proposition, I shall close up all with two or three Inferences.

Inference I.

1. From hence I infer, how unreasonable it is for Men to value themselves upon any of the present Circumstances of this Life: For if Death in all these Respects, is preferable to Life, then, to be sure, the best Circumstances of this Life are very mean and inconsiderable; much too mean for a Man to value himself upon, that is born to live for ever; seeing this mortal Life is so very light and inconsiderable, as that even Death it self (in the Balance of reasonable Estimation) outweighs it. He therefore that values himself by any thing but his immortal Soul, by which he is for ever to out-live this poor inconsiderable Life, and by those things which are its proper Graces and Ornaments, begins at the wrong End of himself, forgets his Jewels, and estimates his Estate by his Lumber: And yet, good God, what foolish Measures do the Generality of Men take of themselves! Were we not forc'd to it, by too many woful Experiments, it would be a hard thing for us to imagine that any reasonable Creature, who believes himself compounded of a mortal Body, and an immortal Soul, should be so ridiculous as to value himself by the little trifling Advantages of a well colour'd Skin, a Sute of fine Cloaths, a Puff of popular Applause, or a large Heap of white and red Earth: And yet, God help us, these are the only things, almost, by which we value and difference our selves from one another. You, forsooth, are a much better Man than your Neighbour, who is a poor contemptible Wretch, a little creeping despicable Animal, not worthy of the Notice or Cognizance of such a Man as you. Why, in the Name of God, Sir, what is the matter? Where is this mighty Difference between you and him? Hath he not a Soul as well as you? A Soul that is capable to live as long, and to be as happy as yours? Yes, this you cannot deny: But you thank God for't, you are, notwithstanding this, an other-guise Man than he; you have a much handsomer Body than he; and, to your great Comfort, it's apparell'd too, much more finely and fashionably: You live in a far more splendid Equipage, and have a larger Purse to maintain it, and your Name is much more

more in Vogue, and makes a far greater Noise in the World. But is this all the difference between your mighty selves and this wretched Neighbour of yours? Alas, poor Man! a few days more will soon put an End to all this; and when once your rich Attires are reduc'd to the Winding-sheet, and all your past Possessions to six Foot of Earth, What will become of all these little Trifles, by which you value your selves? Where then will be the Beauty, the Wealth, the Port, and Garb, which you are now so proud of? Then this lovely Body will look as pale and ghastly; this puffed and lofty Soul will be left as bare, as poor, and naked, as this poor despis'd Neighbour's: And shou'd you now meet his wandring Ghost in the vast World of Spirits, what would you have to boast of more than he, now that your Beauty is wither'd, your Wealth vanish'd, and all your outward Pomp and Splendour shrouded in the Horrors of a silent Grave? Now you will have nothing to distinguish you from the most Contemptible, unless you have wiser and better Souls: And by how much the more you were respected for your Beauty, Wealth, Garb and Equipage, in this World; by so much you will be the more despis'd for your Pride and Insolence, Sensuality and Covetousness in the other. Let us therefore learn to value our selves by that which will abide by us, by our immortal Souls, and by those heavenly Graces which do adorn and accomplish 'em; by our Humility and Devotion, our Charity and Meekness, our Temperance and Justice, which are such Preheminences as will survive our Funerals, and distinguish us from base and abject Souls for ever. But for an immortal Soul to value it self by any of these Temporary Advantages, is in the same degree, ridiculous, as 'twas for the Emperor *Nero* to value himself for being an excellent *Fidler*.

Inference II.

2. From hence I infer, what little reason there is for Men, who have any good Hope of a better Life, to be afraid of Death: For if Death it self, be, upon a just Computation, preferable to this Life, why should that Man be afraid of exchanging this Life for Death, who hath just ground to hope for eternal Life into the Bargain? If Death be an Advantage, consider'd only as it is an *Exit* from the Troubles of this Life, how much more is it so, consider'd as it is an Entry into the Glories and Beatitudes of the other: And therefore, if you will allow it to be unreasonable for sick Men to be afraid of their Recovery, for Slaves to tremble at the News of a Jubilee; for Prisoners to be griev'd at their Gaol-Delivery; how much more unreasonable is it, for a good Man to be afraid of dying, which, to him, is but a momentary Passage from Sicknes to eternal Health, from Labour to eternal Rest, from Confinement to eternal Liberty.

Consider, I beseech you, what great Goods are there in this Life that you have just reason to be fond of? What Evils in the other, that you have any Cause to be afraid of? Suppose that your departed Soul were this Moment upon the Wing, mounting upwards towards the Celestial Abodes; and that, at some convenient Stand, between Heaven and Earth, from whence you might take a full Prospect of both, you were now making a Pause to survey and compare 'em with one another: Suppose, that having view'd over all the Glories above, that having heard the Melodies of Angels, and tasted the Beatifical Joy, you are now looking down again (with your Minds fill'd and ravish'd with those glorious Idea's) upon this miserable World, and that all in a View you beheld the vast Number of Men and Women that at this time are fainting for want of Bread; of young Men that are bleeding under the Sword of War; of Orphans that are lamenting over the Graves of their Parents; of Mariners that are shrieking in a Storm, under the dismal Apprehension of being stranded, or founder'd; of miserable People that are groaning upon sick Beds, or rack'd with Agonies of Conscience; that are weeping with Want, or mad with Oppression, or desperate by too quick a Sense of a continu'd Infelicity. Suppose, I say, you had seen, at two distinct Views,

Views, all those glorious Things above, and those dismal Things below ; Would you not be glad at your hearts that you were gone from hence, that you were out of the Noise and Participation of so many Evils and Calamities ? Would you not be a thousand times more afraid of returning from thence, than ever you were of going from hence thither ? Doubtless you would : Why then should not your Experience of the Miseries here, and your Belief of the Felicities there, produce in you the same Effect ; and make you chearfully willing whenever God pleases to call you, to exchange this wretched Life for that blessed Immortality ?

Inference III.

3. And *Lastly*, From hence I infer, what is the proper End and Use of living ; namely, that it is so to live here, as that we may live happily hereafter. For if Death it self be better than this Life, then it can be upon no other account good for us to live, than as we live in order to our living for ever. And indeed it seems very strange, that any reasonable Beings should ever entertain such mean and fordid Thoughts of themselves, such narrow Scantlings of their own Capacities, as to think, that they were born to no other Purpose, but only to eat, and drink, and sleep, and wake, for twenty or thirty Years together ; and all this while to be only made the Sport of an inconstant Fortune, and bandied to and fro, like Tennis-Balls, upon the Rackets of every cross Turn and Revolution of Things ; from Pain to Pleasure, and from Pleasure to Pain ; from Fulness to Want ; from Honour to Infamy, and so back again ; and never to rest in one State, till the Game is plaid out, and then to return into eternal Silence and Insensibility. I profess, in my most serious Thoughts, I cannot but wonder, that one who thinks so abjectly of himself, should ever have the Patience to outlive such a Thought, to avoid the Temptation of dispatching himself out of this Croud and Hurry of Impertinencies, into the dark Retirement of a quiet Grave. For upon what other account can this vain wretched Life be desirable, than as it is a State of Trial and Probation for Immortality and Happiness ? And if upon this account alone, it is desirable, O good God ! how do these Men cheat and abuse themselves, who build their Tabernacles here, and aim at no other Happiness than this present State of Things affords ; who tho' they have Capacities large enough for a Heaven of immortal Joys, Faculties great enough to converse with Angels, and communicate with 'em in their highest Glories and Beatitudes ; can yet sit down tamely, satisfy'd with a Condition so wretched and miserable ! In the Name of God therefore, let us now at last remember, that we are born for higher things than these, for far more solid and substantial Enjoyments : And considering this, for shame, let us rouse up our selves, and shake off this fordid and degenerate Temper, that makes us act so infinitely unbecoming the Dignity of our Rational and Immortal Natures. And since we are not only fitted for a higher Happiness, but also assur'd of enjoying it, upon condition we qualify our selves for it, by acquiring these heavenly Dispositions of Soul, without which it is impossible for us to relish it ; let us now at length arise and dress our selves for Eternity, by first putting off our old Man, with all its corrupt Lusts and Affections, and then putting on a New, which consists in Repentance from dead Works ; in fervent Love, and profound Veneration of God, and a sincere Subjection to his heavenly Will ; in Temperance, Humility, and Justice, and universal Charity to all Men. And when we have thus array'd our selves, thus excellently adorn'd and beautify'd our Natures, we have liv'd to admirable purpose indeed ; liv'd to live happily for ever, to accomplish our selves for the eternal Embraces of the God of Love, and for the Society and Happiness of Angels, and of blessed Spirits.

And so I have done with the Text ; and shall only add a few Words upon the sorrowful Occasion, *viz.* the Funeral of Sir *John Chapman*, late Lord Mayor of this famous City ; and that I may not say any thing of him that shall look like Flattery, or an over-kind Partiality to his Memory ; I will say nothing of him, but

but what, I am sure, that all that knew him, as I did, will justify; and for those that knew him not, I am sure 'twill be highly uncharitable for them to contradict me. I cannot deny, but that as he was a Man, so he had the Frailties of a Man, which common Charity obliges us to bury in Silence and Oblivion: But with those Frailties, he had a great many excellent Qualities, in which, I heartily wish some Men would be as forward to imitate him, as they have been to censure and traduce him: For, I am sure, if they were, 'twould turn to a much better Account to them, both here and hereafter. As for his Religion, I speak it upon certain Knowledge, he was a firm and hearty Protestant of the Communion of the *Church of England*; that Church, which however it may be now reproach'd and vilify'd by an ungrateful Generation, was, not long ago, the Fence of the *English* Laws and Liberties, and the only standing Bank against the Inundations of Popery, when it was threatening to overwhelm us all: Of this Church was our deceased Friend a Cordial and an Affectionate Son; he lov'd its Constitution, frequented its Worship and Communion; and could his honest Zeal to it, have permitted him to trinkle with Popery, (as some others did who made the loudest Noise against it when there was no Danger in view,) and given it but a helping Hand to destroy those Legal Securities which stood in its way, and (under God's Providence) were the only insuperable Fence against it; he might have been, to my Knowledge, Lord Mayor soon enough to have out-liv'd his Mayoralty: And how well and wisely he behav'd himself in it, under the most difficult Circumstances; how effectually he consulted the City's Peace and Security, when Dangers environ'd her on every side; how equally he pois'd himself amidst all Extreams; how prudently he weather'd the threatening Storm of Military Force that hung over it; how happily he stemm'd the difficult Tide of Popular Commotion, which in other Parts bore down all before it; will perhaps be remembred to his immortal Honour, whenever a more grateful Age succeeds. I know, he hath been frequently charg'd with keeping secret Correspondencies with the Enemies of our Laws and Religion, and therein, of betraying the great Trust reposed in him. But this is a Calumny as ridiculous as it is false: For how was it possible for a Person of my Lord Mayor's Figure, to convey himself invisibly (as this Story pretends Sir *John Chapman* did,) from one End of the Town to the other, without the Privity of his own numerous Family, who knew nothing of the matter; or the Cognizance of all that populous City between? But this I certainly know, that so far as the Laws of Civility and Duty would admit, he always industriously avoided all secret Conversation; and made it the leading Principle of his Conduct, through all that difficult Scene of Affairs, to act upon no other secret Orders or Counsels, but what were first propos'd, and consented to, by his worthy Brethren of the *Court of Aldermen*. And as he thus Acted upon the square in all his publick Administrations; so in his private Capacity, he was a Person of unspotted Integrity and Justice in all his Entercourses with Men; One, who, as I verily believe, did never wilfully wrong any Man in the World: Of the Truth of which, take one Instance for all: He having, many Years ago, had great Dealings with a certain Person, well known in this City, there remain'd a large Account between 'em, which, at length, was even'd, adjust'd, and discharg'd on both sides: But several Years after, he having some occasion to review this Account, found there was a great Mistake in it, and that there remain'd a very considerable Sum of Money due to his Correspondent; upon which he immediately goes and acquaints him with it, and pays him to the utmost Farthing. An Example of Justice, which I would to God, those Men would imitate that make so bold with his Memory. Nor was he less benign and charitable, than he was honest and just: For as he was a good Neighbour, and a hearty Friend; so he was a general Lover of Mankind, always free and forward to render good Offices to all that needed and crav'd his Assistance.

And then, as for his *Alms*, I must crave Leave of his Ashes, to do a Right to his Memory, against his own Inclinations: For, in his Life-time, he was so severe an Observer of our Saviour's Caution, *Take heed that ye do not your Alms before Men;*

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so utterly abhorrent of that Pharisaical Humour, of performing his good Works in a clear Eccho that might be sure to resound 'em after him in Praises and Commendations, that perhaps he too much affected Privacy and Concealment: And was so far from desiring that *his Light* should glare out in Vanity and Ostentation, that he would not suffer it to *shine out* enough *before Men*, to provoke 'em by the sight of it, to glorifie our common Father in Heaven: For his Charity ran underground in such secret Channels, that some, I know, were apt to question whether the Spring were not dry, or at least, very scanty in its Communications. But now he is gone, his Memory, like the Leaves of Roses, smells sweet and fragrant after the Rose is dead: For now, that he is out of hearing, and those few that knew his Charities, and those many that were refresh'd by 'em, dare own and attest 'em, without fear of offending his modest Piety; it appears, by several hundreds of Pounds which he gave in his Life, upon several charitable Occasions, besides the charitable Legacies he hath bequeath'd at his Death, that he was, not only in Word, but in Deed, a true Benefactor to Mankind. And then, as for his *Relative Duties*, he was that which every good Man is, (and without which, it is fulsome Hypocrisie for any Man to pretend to Religion) *viz.* a kind and obliging Husband, a tender and provident Father, a courteous and benevolent Master; and in all the Degrees of his Relation, a ready Assistant, a useful Friend, and a generous Benefactor. Such was his Life. And as for his last Sickness, though it now and then interrupted the Exercise of his Reason; yet no sooner was it restor'd to him, but he gave all the Indications of a truly pious and devout Mind: He heartily lamented the Failings of his Life, and bound himself in new Resolutions of Amendment: He underwent his Pains with a calm and constant Mind; and seem'd full of good Thoughts, and holy Affections; full of hearty Submissions and Resignations to God: And in this Excellent Posture of Mind he expir'd into Eternity. Where, *God grant, that with him, together with all those that are departed this Life in the true Faith of Christ's holy Name, we may all have our perfect Consummation and Bliss both in Body and Soul, in everlasting Glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord: To whom, with the Father, and Eternal Spirit, be ascribed all Honour and Praise, now and for ever. Amen.*

SERMON XI.

PREACH'D

Before the Queen, *May 22, 1692.* upon occasion of the Victory obtain'd by their Majesties Fleet over the *French.*

PSAL. l. 14.

Offer unto God Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the Most High.

IN the Foregoing Verses the Psalmist (whether he were *David* or *Asaph*, is uncertain) introduces God as delivering his own Sence concerning the Ritual and Ceremonial Religion of the *Jews*, upon which they so much valu'd themselves, and laid such mighty Strefs. Ver. 7. *Hear, O my People, and I will speak, O Israel, and I will testifie against thee*; or I have something of high Moment to speak to thee, *I am God, even thy God*; that God, who under the Title of *The Lord thy God*, brought thee out of the Land of *Egypt*, and gave thee the Moral Law comprised in Ten Commandments. *I will not reprove thee for thy Sacrifices and Burnt-Offerings to have been continually before me*: I know, thou art exact enough in the Observance of these my Ritual Commands; and therefore, as to this matter I do not blame thee: But this is not the thing I chiefly value and esteem: 'Tis the Observance of my Moral Laws, in which thou art extremely defective, that I principally insist on. As for those Sacrifices with which thou caus'est mine Altars continually to smoak, they are Things with which (if I needed them) I could supply my self from the Herds of a thousand Hills which thou knowest not, and which are all my own. And so he goes on to the Text, upbraiding them with laying the whole Strefs of their Religion upon their exact Performance of the instituted Rites of it; which, tho' it was their Duty, yet the least part of it. And then comes in the Text, to acquaint them what was the main of their Religion, which he principally intended, and was most delighted in, and wherein they were most remiss and negligent, *Offer unto God Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the Most High*; i. e. It thou wilt bring me an acceptable Sacrifice indeed, in the first place, bring me a truly thankful Heart, that gratefully receives and acknowledges my Benefits; and in the next place, perform to me those Vows and Promises of Repentance and Amendment which thou madest to me in thy Affliction; when out of extreme Want of the Benefits I have since bestow'd on thee, thou wast earnestly imploring them at my Hands.

I shall at present only treat of the first of these, *Offer unto God Thanksgiving*: Which, according to the Sence I have given of the Text and Coherence, is a Duty of far more Value with God, than any of the instituted Rituals of Religion,

as being one of those Moral and Eternal Duties in which the main Substance of Religion doth consist. In handling this Argument therefore, I shall endeavour these two things :

First, To shew you what this Duty is, and wherein it doth consist.

Secondly, To shew you, that it is a Moral Duty, or, which is the same thing, a Duty enforced with eternal Reasons.

I. What this Duty of Thanksgiving is, and wherein it doth consist. In general, Thanksgiving consists in rendring to our Benefactors a chearful Acknowledgment of the Benefits we have received at their Hands ; and consequently to offer Thanksgiving to God, is freely, heartily and chearfully to acknowledge and recognize to him the manifold Favours and Benefits, which, with a most liberal Hand he bestows upon us from time to time. In order to which, it is necessary, that we should diligently remark and attend to his Benefits, and not suffer them to pass through our Minds, like Birds through the Air, without leaving any Track or Path behind them ; but that we should so curiously observe and take notice of them, that every Footstep of them, if possible, may remain upon our Memories in lively and lasting Impressions : For though we can no more count the Benefits of God, than we can the Moments of Eternity ; and though whenever we enter into the Recollection of them, we are like a Man that is diving into the Bottom of the Sea, over whose Head the Water runs insensibly ; so as that neither he is pressed with the Weight of it, nor confounded with the Number of the Drops of it ; because he attempts not to cast them up ; but concludes them innumerable : Yet there are many and many of the Benefits of God which lie so open to our Observation, being attended with such endearing and remarkable Circumstances, as that without great Stupidity, we cannot but take notice of them. And therefore in order to our being truly thankful to God, it is requisite that such as these should be drawn and imprinted upon our Memories in strong and lively Colours, not to be worn or wash'd out by Time or Chance ; but to flourish there, if possible, like the Pictures of the Graces in immortal Youth. And as to our giving Thanks to God for his Benefits, as it is requisite that we should, so far as we are able, closely observe and remember them ; so it is no less requisite, that, by frequent Reflexions upon them, we should endeavour to raise in our Minds a just Value and Esteem of them ; and thereby to affect our own Hearts with a warm and vigorous Sense of the Divine Goodness, that inexhaustible Fountain whence every Good we receive is derived. And when with the close Consideration of the Favours and Benefits of God, we have chafed our own Souls into an affectionate Feeling of his Goodness, we may then cry out with *David*, *My Heart is ready, O Lord, my Heart is ready, I will sing and give Praise*. For the Requisites before mentioned, are only necessary Dispositions and Preparations to Thanksgiving ; they are only the tuning the Strings of the musical Instrument, and setting it in order, for the Angelical Harmony to be plaid on it : But the Thanksgiving it self consists in an affectionate Acknowledgment to God, of the manifold Favours we have received at his hands ; together with all those gracious Circumstances, so far as we are able to recollect them, with which they came attended. Which Acknowledgment is to be made, either in express Words, in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, or by recounting his Favours to him in mental Recognitions ; which is to make Melody in our Hearts to the Lord. But because usually, when the Heart is full, the Mouth will overflow ; therefore Thanksgiving, in common Acceptation, signifies an Oral and Verbal Acknowledgment of God's Favours, arising from an inward and affectionate Sense and Feeling of his Goodness towards us. And to crown all this, and render our Thanksgiving substantial and real, it must be accompany'd with a hearty Study and Intention of Soul, to render unto God for his Favour all possible Compensation, to gratifie him with our free and chearful Obedience ; and more especially, with our Charity and Beneficence, towards his poor and indigent Creatures ; whose Wants are the Briefs by which God authorizes them to ask Relief for his sake, and to receive it in his Name. *He that giveth to the Poor, saith the Wise Man, lendeth*

to the Lord; and consequently, he that giveth not, refuseth to lend to the Lord; which is inconsistent with any Degree of hearty Gratitude towards him. For how can he be truly thankful to God for his Favours, who hath no intention to render him any Compensation? And what intention can he have to compensate God, who will not lend him a little Money, or a little Bread, when by the Mouths or Necessities of his Poor he craves it? This Man compliments God, instead of thanking him; and only flatters him with feigned Lips, in hope thereby to obtain farther Favours of him, without being at all influenc'd by an ingenuous Sence of his Goodness, to make him any Returns for what he hath already receiv'd. So that the full Import of our *Offering Thanksgiving* to God, is, to render him an affectionate Acknowledgment of his manifold Benefits, with an hearty Intention to make him all the Compensation for them we are able, by our constant and chearful Obedience to his Heavenly Will, and Readiness to repay him in Works of Charity, according as our Abilities, and the Necessities of the Poor shall require it. And accordingly, the Psalmist himself thus explains this Duty; *I will remember, saith he, thy Works of old, and talk of thy Doings.* And elsewhere, *My Mouth shall praise thee with joyful Lips, when I remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate on thee in the Night Watches, because thou hast been my Help.* Here is his Advertence to, and Recollection of the Mercies of God towards him. And then he goes on, *How excellent is thy Loving-kindness, O God! How precious are thy Thoughts unto me! How great is the Sum of them! If I should count them, they are more than the Sand.* Here is his high Esteem and Value of the Divine Benefits. Then he proceeds: *Because thy Loving-kindness is better than Life, my Lips shall praise thee; my Soul shall be filled as with Marrow and Fatness; my Mouth shall praise thee with joyful Lips.* Here is his affectionate Sence of the Divine Goodness towards him. Then he breaks forth into Raptures of Thanksgiving; *I will sing of the Mercies of the Lord for ever; with my Mouth will I make known his Faithfulness to all Generations: I will speak of the glorious Honour of thy Majesty, and of thy wondrous Works: I will praise the Name of the Lord with a Song; I will magnifie him with Thanksgiving.* And, Lastly, he closes all this, with a hearty Design of rendring to God these best and noblest Compensations of his Obedience and Charity: *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his Benefits? And upon this Enquiry resolves; I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord: I will pay my Vows unto the Lord, i.e.* Those Vows of Sacrifice, and Alms of Fidelity and Obedience, which I made in my Distress and Affliction. And thus you see what is here implied in this Duty of *Offering Thanksgiving* unto God.

I proceed now in the second place, to shew you, that this is a Moral Duty, not founded upon positive Will and Institution, as Sacrificing was, which therefore could no longer oblige, than during the Continuance of that positive Will; but upon eternal and immutable Reasons, which no positive Will can ever cancel or repeal: And this, I doubt not, will appear upon the following Considerations:

First, The Justice and Equality of it.

Secondly, The Pleasure and Delightfulness of it.

Thirdly, The Obligations it lays upon God to continue and repeat his Favours.

Fourthly, The great Aid and Furtherance it gives us in all our other Duties.

Fifthly, The mighty Relish it gives to all God's Favours and Benefits.

Sixthly, The great Support and Confirmation it affords our Faith and Dependence upon God for the future.

I. Thankfulness to God is due to him in strict Justice and Equity: For the Benefits God bestows upon us, are rather Loans than Gifts; because as he is Supreme Lord of the World, he retains an unalienable Propriety in every Good he bestows; and upon that account he may justly demand of us whatsoever Homage or Quit-rent he pleaseth: And certainly the least he can claim, is our Gratitude; from which we are so far from being released by the Freeness of his Gifts, that

that we are the more strictly oblig'd by it. For he who receives a Benefit, whether it be from God or Man, owes more or less for it, proportionably, as the Benefit is greater or less. Seeing therefore that a Benefit freely given, is, *ceteris paribus*, much greater than a Benefit lent; 'tis certain, that the freer we have it, the more we owe for't. Now as for the Benefits of God, they are not only in themselves of greater Value than what any other can give or lend us; but they are also given us upon the most free, and noble, and generous Terms: For tho' when he bestows 'em upon us, he doth not, like other Donors, give 'em away from himself; but reserves his inherent Right in them, as Lord Paramount of all his Creation: Yet this Reservation of his, is no damage to us, seeing we enjoy his Gifts as amply and freely as if he had alienated to us his Right in 'em. Tho' he still continues Sovereign Lord of the Fee, and every thing we hold, we hold as his Tenants by his Grant, and in his Right; yet the Quit-rent he requires of us (which is only our Gratitude, and which in Justice would have been due to him, tho' he should never have requir'd it,) is not only so very small and easie in it self, but also so highly advantageous to us, that instead of being impoverish'd, we are enrich'd by the Payment of it: So that our Tenure under him is far better for us than if we were Freeholders, without any Condition at all; the Condition of this Benefit being such as is so far from sinking the Value of 'em, as that it very much raises and enhances 'em. So that as we stand in Justice oblig'd to be grateful to all our Benefactors, (seeing every Benefit deserves of us as much as it is worth; and the smallest is worth our Gratitude; so more especially, to God, who not only gives us all the good Things we enjoy; but takes care also to give 'em to us upon the most beneficial Considerations, *viz.* That we Thankfully receive 'em; Which if we duly perform, will prove far more beneficial to us, than all his other Benefits.

II. Consider the Pleasure and Delightfulness of this Duty. It is true, in other parts of Devotion there is something that is Painful and Laborious to Human Nature: For so Prayer awakens in us a sorrowful Sense of Wants and Imperfections; Confession excites in us sharp and dolorous Reflections upon our Guilts and Mis-carriages: But *Thanksgiving* has nothing in it but a warm Sence of the mightiest Love, and most endearing Goodness. For it is only the Overflow of a Heart full of Love, the free Sally and Emission of a Soul that is captivated and endeared by Kindness; and there is no Passion in Human Nature so sweet and ravishing as Love; especially while being heated with the warm Sence of the Kindness of its Belov'd, it boils over upon it in Praise and Gratitude. And seeing our Thanksgiving lives upon Love and Beneficence, and is all along nourish'd and maintain'd by it, the greater the Love is upon which it feeds, and the more the Beneficence, the richer its Fare is, and the nobler its Entertainment. But where can our Gratitude find out a Love comparably so great, or productive of such ample Beneficence, as that of God's? Upon this inexhaustible Subject it may live for ever without any other Supplies; and fare deliciously every Moment to Eternal Ages. For what more delicious or comfortable Thought can ever present it self to the Mind of Man, than this, that the Great Lord of the World, the good, the wise and mighty King of Heaven and Earth, is our faithful, kind and munificent Friend; that his Heart is always pregnant with Designs of Love to us; and that the great Subject of all his Contrivances, is, to do us good here, and to render us Glorious hereafter? O, were such Thoughts as these but set home upon our Hearts with their full and due *Emphasis*, how would they even ravish and transport our Souls! How would they convert all our Faculties into Consent and Harmony, and even evaporate our Spirits in Songs of Praise and Thanksgiving to him! And whilst, from a lively Sense of all these Wonders of his Love, we are offering up to him our Sacrifice of Thanksgiving; O, with what Triumph and Exultation of Soul should we ascend in the Flames of it! But alas, we are, even the best of us, in a great Measure unacquainted with the Pleasure and Sweetness of this heavenly Performance; and the Reason is, because we have not a quick Sence and lively Relish of the divine Goodness upon which it terminates.

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Had we this always present with us, we should feel so much Joy and Pleasure in Thanksgiving, that it would be our Heaven upon Earth, our Meat and Drink, our Business and Recreation, to breathe up our Souls to God in Hymns of Praise. But this we do all know, who know any thing of Religion, that to laud and magnifie the Lord, is the End for which we were born, and the Heaven for which we are design'd ; and that when we are arriv'd to that vigorous Sence of the Divine Love that the blessed People of Heaven have attain'd, we shall need no other, either Employment, or Pleasure, to render us for ever happy ; but only to sing eternal Praises and *Hallelujahs to our God, and to the Lamb that sitteth upon the Throne* ; the vigorous Relish of whose unspeakable Goodness to us, will so inflame our Love and animate our Gratitude, that to Eternal Ages we shall be never able to contain our selves from breaking out into new Songs of Praise ; and then every new Song will create a new Pleasure, and every new Pleasure dictate a new Song, and so round again for ever. But these are things too sublime for our short Reach and Cognizance : Only at present let us but consult the Experience of devout and grateful Souls about them ; and this will assure us, that there is nothing under Heaven so pleasant and delightful, as from a warm and vigorous Sence of the Love of God, to breathe up our Souls to him in Praise and Thanksgiving ; that this gives such a Jubilee to the Mind, such a sprightly Recreation to the Heart, as far exceeds the most studied artificial Pleasures of Epicurism. But for Satisfaction in this Point, we need go no farther than to our praiseful Psalmist, who, tho' he were a King, and had all the Pleasures of a fruitful Kingdom at his Beck and Command, yet doth upon his own Experience, advise, *Praise the Lord, for the Lord is Good ; sing Praises to his Name, for it is pleasant* : and elsewhere, *Praise the Lord for it is good ; to sing Praises to our God, it is pleasant, and Praise is comely*. Seeing therefore that Gratitude to God is so high a Pleasure, and such a grateful Entertainment to the Rational Soul, when it is duly disposed ; this is such a Motive to the Practice of it, as carries with it an eternal Force and Obligation.

III. Gratitude to God mightily obliges him to continue and repeat his Favours to us. For though God doth not covet our Thanksgivings for himself, or out of any Prospect of Advantage they can bring him ; he being so entirely happy in his own Perfections, that neither the Praises of Angels can add any thing to him, nor the Blasphemies of Devils subtract any thing from him : Yet when he so freely bestows his Benefits upon us, he expects the Return of our Gratitude, both as it is highly just and reasonable in it self, and vastly beneficial and advantageous to us. For he being infinitely reasonable himself, and loving himself infinitely for being so ; he cannot for his own sake, but love what is fit and reasonable in others ; and what he so justly loves in us, he justly expects of us. It is highly displeasing to him to see us ungrateful to others, as well as to himself ; not that he sustains any Damage thereby : For how can he be the worse for our Ingratitude to others ? But the Ground of his Displeasure is, to see Reasonable Beings so grossly swerve from the Canon of right Reason and Justice, and act so contrarily to the Laws of his Nature and their own. So again, he is as well pleased and delighted when he finds us thankful to our other Benefactors, as when we are so to him ; not that he can reap the least Benefit or Advantage from the Thanks which we render to others : For how can he be the better for that which he doth not receive ? But because the thing is just and reasonable in it self ; and because whatsoever is so, is amiable and delightful in his Eyes : And as God expects our Gratitude for its own sake, as it is in it self a most just, and comely, and reasonable thing ; so doth he also expect it for our sake, as it is one of the most advantageous things we can do for our selves. For by accustoming our selves to frequent Returns of Thanksgiving to God, we shall by degrees gain a thankful Frame and Disposition of Soul, which (as I shall shew by and by) will both Influence us in all other parts of our Duty with a mighty Chearfulness and Alacrity of Spirit, and carry us on through the most wearisome Stages of it with an indefatigable Vigour, and also inhance the Value of the Divine Benefits, and render them

them more precious in our Esteem, and consequently more comfortable in our Enjoyment. When therefore we receive the Benefits of God with a thankful Heart, he obtains both these Ends upon us; which must needs lay a strong Obligation upon him to continue and multiply them to us: When he shall see that his Favours are not sown upon a barren Soil; but that they spring up in such Fruits as are most delightful to himself, and most beneficial to us; what a powerful Motive must this be to engage him to sow them more abundantly? There is nothing doth more oblige a generous Benefactor, than to see a good Use made of his Benefits: And the best Use we can make of them, is to gratifie him with such things as he most delights in, and to improve them to our utmost Advantage: Which will render him so far from repenting of his Favours, and resolving to withhold them for the future; that it will be a mighty Gratification to himself to repeat, and increase them, whenever any just Occasion requires it. And therefore, seeing God is the freest and most generous Benefactor in the World, we may depend upon it, that if we make that good Use of his Benefits for which he designed them; if we render him such grateful Returns for them, as are truly delightful to him, and advantageous to our selves, he will be so far from stinting his Hand to us for the future, that he will *rejoyce over us to do us good*, and be as highly pleased to multiply his Benefits upon us, as we can be to receive them. In short, the greatest Obligation that can be laid upon a generous Goodness, such as God's is, is to do good with his Benefits, and to fare well upon them; both which a thankful Mind doth to the highest degree: And therefore such, and such only, are the proper Soil for God to sow his Benefits in. Here they will grow with vast Encrease and Improvement: Whereas in ungrateful Minds, they will either be soon wash'd away in a stupid Oblivion of them, or soon wither away in a sordid Neglect of them, or else spring up only into Weeds and Tares, into Pride or Luxury, or Vanity and Vexation of Spirit. This therefore is an eternal Reason why we should offer up our Thanksgiving to God; because hereby we answer the great Ends for which he showers his Benefits on us, and thereby lay a powerful Obligation upon him to continue and increase 'em.

IV. Thankfulness to God doth very much promote and facilitate the Practice of Religion: For, as was shewn before, all hearty Thanksgiving springs out of a warm and vigorous Sence of God's Goodness towards us: And, as that naturally flows into Praise and Thanksgiving; so this flows as naturally into a free and chearful Obedience. The more thankful we are for the Benefits of God, the more sensible we shall still be of our Obligations to him; and the more sensible we are of these, the more disposed we shall be to gratifie him by our ready Obedience to him. These things follow as naturally one another, as Heat follows Fire, and as Burning follows Heat. He therefore, who by frequent Acts of Praise hath acquir'd a thankful Frame and Disposition of Soul, hath surmounted three Parts in four, of all the Fatigue of Religion: For what can be too hard for a Soul that is inspir'd with an active Sence of the Divine Goodness? This will convert the most painful Duties into the most delightful Recreations, and prove such an ever-flowing Fountain of Divine Rhetorick within us, as will supersede the Necessity of any other Motives and Arguments. How can I do too much, cries the grateful Soul, for so kind a God, and so liberal a Benefactor? To his boundless Goodness I owe all that I am, all that I have, and all that I hope for: To him I am indebted for such stupendous Favours, as considering my Unworthiness of 'em, doth not only puzzle my Conceit, but out-reach my Wonder and Admiration. And can I be so base, as to reckon any thing too much in return for such astonishing Kindnesses? I can give him back nothing, but what I have received of him; and if I should give him back my Life, or the dearest Enjoyment I have in the World, I should not give him the thousandth Part of what I have received. What then shall I render unto the Lord for all his Benefits? Shall I not chearfully render him whatever he asks, tho' it were greatly to my Damage; tho' it were to strip my self of all the Comforts of my Life, to sacrifice my *Isaac* to him; yea, my own Life and Being? And much more, when he

he asks nothing of me, but what is fit and reasonable; nothing but what is profectve of my Nature, and conducive to my eternal Happiness: When he only requires me to sacrifice my Lusts unto him, which are the Shame and Scandal of my Nature; to wash and be clean, to deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present World. O, far be it from me, to deny such a bountiful Friend such just and reasonable Demands. This is the constant Sence of a truly grateful Soul. And being under the Influence of such moving Oratory and Persuasion, with what Chearfulness and Alacrity must she run the Ways of God's Commandments? How greedily must she catch at all Opportunities of serving him; and how readily close with every Intimation of his Will; how contrary soever to the Inclinations of Flesh and Blood? And instead of bogling at the Difficulties of Religion; O, how will such a Soul rejoyce, that she hath an Opportunity in her Hands to express, by the Readiness of her Obedience, the grateful Sence she hath of that Goodness to which she is so infinitely obliged? Doubtless, were our Hearts but touch'd with a quick Sence of the Goodness of God, this would carry us triumphantly thorough all the Difficulties of our Duty; and we should be so far, for the future, from complaining of the Uneasiness of our Yoke, that we should be ready to thank God upon our Knees for putting such a Test of Duty on us, whereby we might have an Opportunity to express our Gratitude to him by the Readiness of our Obedience. Seeing therefore that Thanksgiving is so great a Furtherance to us in the Course of our Duty, to be sure, if we owe any thing to God, we must owe this to him, by an eternal Obligation.

V. Thanksgiving to God will render all his Favours to us, more grateful and acceptable to our selves. All Benefits are greater or lesser to us, as they stand higher or lower in our Esteem and Valuation. To enjoy the Light of the Sun, is doubtless, in it self a very great Benefit; but the Commonness of it takes off our heedless Minds from attending to it, and weighing it in the Balance of a just Valuation; by reason of which, it grows cheap in our Esteem, and we have no Taste or Relish of the Pleasure and Comfort of it; but enjoy it Year after Year, with a perfect Unconcern and Indifferency. But if after a long Blindness, our Sight should be instantly restored to us, or we should of a sudden be snatch'd up into the Light, after a tedious Confinement to some dismal Dungeon; O, with what Rapture should we salute the Day, what Hymns should we sing to the joyful Light? With what chearful Thoughts would it inspire our Breasts; and with what unspeakable Joy should we survey that glorious Scene of Things which it opens and discloses? And yet the Benefit of Light is the same to all that enjoy it: And if those who continually enjoy it, had maintained in their Minds the same just Esteem of it, as they have, who are newly restor'd to it, they would always enjoy it with the same Satisfaction: And the Case is the same as to all the other Benefits of God; of a great part of the Comfort whereof we spoil and deprive our selves, for want of that grateful Sence and just Esteem of them which they merit and deserve: For a thankful Mind will make the utmost of the Benefits it receives, and weigh them nicely by Grains and Scruples, and consider them in all their endearing Circumstances, and take into its Account their most minute Appendages, to enhance its own Value and Esteem of them. And seeing it is our Esteem of Benefits that raises or sinks our Enjoyment of them, to be sure, the higher we Esteem the Benefits of God, the more we must enjoy them. So that while unthankful Souls, for want of a just Estimate of the Favours of God, do scarce enjoy the Tithe of them; but whilst they feed on them, are dissatisfy'd with them, and like the most curriish Animals, while they are gnawing on their Prey, do grumble over it; those who are truly thankful, feed upon every Blessing with Joy and Content; and like the industrious Bees, having suck'd out all the Sweetness of the Flowers they live upon, go singing home with it to their Hives. And I make no doubt, but he who hath a grateful Sence and just Esteem of the Goodness of God to him, enjoys with far more Comfort even a Cup of fair Water, and a brown Morsel, than the fat ungrateful Glutton doth his studied and artifi-

artificial Luxuries. Seeing therefore, our Thankfulness to God for his Benefits doth so much heighten and improve our Enjoyment of them, if it be eternally reasonable that we should make the best of his Benefits, this lays an eternal Obligation on us to be grateful to him.

VI. and *Lastly*, Thankfulness to God gives a great Support to our Hope and Dependence on him for the future: For besides that, the very Sense and Consciousness of the thankful Returns we have made him, will encourage us to hope, that that God, who hath found us grateful for what we have received, will account himself obliged in Generosity, though not in Justice, to heap his Favours on us more abundantly; the thankful Reception of past Favours being the greatest Inducement to generous Benefactors, to bestow more and greater for the future: Besides this, I say, the very Recollection and Remembrance of the manifold Favours of God which we have already received, and which our own grateful Sense of them will be sure to engrave upon our Minds in the most durable Characters, will prove a constant Fund of happy Experience for our Hope to live upon for the future: So that whenever we are reduc'd to strait and low Circumstances, and are either pinch'd with the Want of any necessary Good, or are ready to despond of Deliverance from any imminent Evil, the grateful Remembrance we retain of past Instances of God's Kindness to us, will be a mighty Encouragement to our Faith and Hope, securely to depend upon him for the future. *The Lord that delivered me, saith David, out of the Paw of the Lion, and out of the Paw of the Bear, he will deliver me out of the Hand of this Philistine.* Where you see, he grounds his Dependence for one Deliverance, upon his grateful Remembrance of another: And indeed, there is no Man in the World can have that ample Experience of the Goodness of God, as he who makes constant Returns of Praise and Thanksgiving for it; such a Man merely to improve his Gratitude, will make it his Business curiously to animadvert upon every Instance of the Divine Goodness; and to descant upon every Hint, Intimation, and Circumstance of it, and treasure up every Passage in everlasting Remembrance. And seeing Experience is nothing but the Observation of Things treasur'd up in the Memory, he who best remembers the manifold Expressions of God's Goodness to him, and makes the strictest Observations upon them, must have attain'd to the fullest and most intimate Experience of it: And when all is done, there is nothing will create in us that sure Confidence in God, and firm Dependence upon him, as our own Experience of his Faithfulness and Goodness. If I have a Friend, whom in numerous Instances I have always found faithful, and constant, and kind, I reckon, I may rely upon him with almost the same Security as I can rely upon my self: And when in innumerable Instances, I have always found God my Friend, my generous, and kind, and faithful Friend, and I have all these Instances of it fresh in my Memory, and under my Observation; this must needs create in me a very secure Affiance in him, and carry up my Faith and Hope into an high *Plerophory*. Thus Gratitude to God begets in us an ample Experience of his Goodness; and that Experience begets in us a firm Dependence upon him: So that if it be eternally reasonable that we should securely rely upon God, by whose Power and Goodness we are supported in Being every Moment of our Existence; it is upon this account also eternally reasonable, that we should offer up our Thanksgivings to him.

To conclude all therefore, seeing our Obligations to this Duty are so great and many, let us be persuaded to comply with them in our Practice. Certainly, never were any People more importunately invird hereunto, than we are at this time. It is not long since we were threatned with a Foreign Invasion, and had too much Cause to apprehend the Landing of a Formidable Enemy on our Shores; an Enemy that with a thousand Barbarities hath proclaimed himself an implacable Prosecutor of our Religion; and that wheresoever he goes, carries Ruin and Destruction along with him. But behold, all of a sudden the melancholy Scene is changed, and our dark Prospect is clear'd up with a glorious Vision: For by a wonderful Interposure of the Divine Providence, we are not only delivered from

the Hands of our Enemies; but our Enemies are deliver'd into ours: Their Naval Force, in which they so much gloried, and upon which their whole Success depended, being by the miraculous Blessing of God upon the good Conduct and Bravery of ours, scatter'd and broken in a few Hours; and we not only preserv'd, but crowned with one of the most Glorious Victories that ever the Sea beheld; which, considering our Circumstances, who have no other Trench but the Ocean, no other Wall but our Navy round about us, is certainly one of the most remarkable Instances of God's watchful Providence over us for good, that even our own Hearts could have wish'd for: For how much the good Providence of God hath concern'd it self in this whole Affair, is so remarkably evident, that we cannot but discern it, unless we wilfully shut our Eyes. For what a strange Concurrence was there of Events, that are only in the Disposal of God? *The Stars in their Courses fought against Sicera*; the Winds and Storms, for several Weeks were arm'd against one Part of their Navy, by which some were lost, others disabled, and all detained from joyning with the other Part of it, which by contrary Winds was also detained from Engaging us, till such time as our whole Force was united; and then God gave a Gale that blew them on to their own Destruction.

To all which is to be added, another most considerable Instance of God's good Providence towards us, *viz.* That a wary Enemy who always acts with the greatest Caution and most sagacious Foresight, and who never yet fought without some considerable Advantage, should be so stupendously infatuated, as to give us close Battle with a Strength so much inferior to ours. These are all *the Lord's Doings*, and they ought to be *marvellous in our Eyes*; to excite our Gratitude, and unite our Hearts and Lips in Songs of Praise and Thanksgiving to him, that hereby we may engage our Merciful God still to *rejoyce over us to do us good*, and continue to bless their Majesties Arms with Glory and Success.

And in pursuance of this excellent Duty, let us all be persuaded, frequently to retire from our Worldly Occasions, in our own Thoughts, and there to recollect the manifold Favours of God to us, to spread them before our Eyes in their full Breadth, and Length, and Depth; to turn them up and down upon our Thoughts, and survey them in all their Parts and Proportions, till by a thorough View and Consideration of their endearing Features and Lineaments, our Hearts grow warm with a grateful Sense of them; and then to pour out our Souls to God in Praises and Thanksgivings: By the constant Practice of which, we shall by degrees acquire a thankful Frame and Disposition of Soul. And as we grow on, and improve in this heavenly Vertue, we shall feel so much Life, and Spirit, and Sweetness in it, that we shall need no other Motive than that, to oblige us to the Practice of it; and our own Experience will convince us of a Truth, which now, perhaps, seems a wild Paradox to us, *viz.* That to be sensible of God's Benefits, and to meditate on his Goodness, to admire his Excellencies, and to celebrate his Praises, is Heaven it self, the Life of Angels, the Quintessence of all Joy; and in a Word, the Supreme Felicity of Reasonable Beings. Wherefore to assist your Endeavours, and carry on your Minds to this great and blessed Work, I shall briefly propose to your Meditations a few grateful Considerations concerning the Divine Benefits, and so conclude.

First, Consider the vast Extent of God's Benefits, as to the Number of them.

Secondly, Their Stupendous Greatness, as to the Degree and Value of them.

Thirdly, The Generous Freeness of them on God's Part.

Fourthly, The Great Immerit and Undeservedness of them on ours.

Fifthly, The condescending Manner of his bestowing them upon us.

First, Consider the vast Extent of God's Benefits towards us, as to the Number of them; which is so vastly great, that we can no more count them, than we can the Motes in the Air, or the Sands on the Sea shore: All that we can do,

do, is, to reduce them under such Kinds and Orders as the Astronomers do the Stars under such Constellations : But to count them singly, one by one, is a Task exceeds all Arithmetick. In general, for every thing we are, for every thing we have, or ever had, or shall have, we are indebted to his Bounty : That we are Men, and not Worms ; that we are not Stones, or Clods of Earth utterly insensible of all Good, and incapable of all Felicity ; that we are inspir'd with immortal Minds endow'd with vast Capacities of Happiness ; that we have so many sensible Organs capable of relishing such a vast Variety of Pleasures ; and that we have so many suitable Pleasures round about us to treat and entertain them ; that we have Life and Motion, Health and Vigour, Sense and Perception, Reason and Understanding, to guide and govern them, is wholly to be ascrib'd to his Goodness, which penetrates to the very Root and Centre of our Beings. We move upon his Earth, and do breathe upon his Air ; we drink of his Springs, and are fed from his Granaries, and cloath'd from his Wardrobe ; and, in a Word, every good thing we possess, that is either necessary for our Subsistence, or convenient for our Use, or pleasant for our Enjoyment, we derive from his inexhaustible Bounty, which daily encompasses us round about, like many fortunate Islands, with an Ocean of Blessings, the single Drops whereof (tho' we are every Moment of our Lives sensibly refresh'd with one or other of them) we can no more recount, than the *endless Moments* of Eternity. But if to these *numberless Benefits* of God, which we every Day taste, and do sensibly relish and enjoy, we add that *numberless* more, of which we are not sensible, because they run under Ground in invisible Channels, so that we neither see nor taste them, tho' they do us a World of good, we know not how, and insensibly preserve us from a World of Evils ; we may well cry out with the Prophet *David*, *Psal.* 139. 17, 18. *How precious are thy Thoughts unto me, O God ! i. e.* thy kind and merciful Thoughts. *How great is the Sum of them ! If I should count them, they are more in Number than the Sand. Tho' when I awake, I am still with thee. i. e.* recounting thy Favour from Morning till Night ; but after all, can see no End of them.

Secondly, Consider the stupendous Greatness of the *Benefits* of God, as to the Degree and Value of them. There are indeed, *various Degrees* of Worth in the *Benefits* of God ; but the cheapest of them are those which the Divine Goodness hath prepared to serve our present *Necessities*, *Conveniencies* and *Pleasures* ; and yet a great Part of these are of such an intrinsic Worth, that if the Plenty and Commonness of them did not depress their Value, we should esteem them inestimable Treasures. How comfortable is the Appearance of Day, after the long Nights under the Northern Pole ? What *precious Things* are a Cup of Fair Water, or a Morfel of Brown Bread, to such as are pinched with Hunger, or parched with Drought ? And did we but value the smallest *Benefits* of God while we enjoy them, but according to the Prices we our selves set upon them when we want them, it is to be fear'd, we should esteem them higher than we do now the greatest. But as for those *Benefits* of God, which concern our better Part and eternal Interest, they are such as only an Infinite Goodness can bestow : For what Goodness less than Infinite, could have prepared for us a Heaven of immortal Joys, Joys which the Holy Angels, yea, which God himself lives upon ? What lesser Goodness could send down the Son of God to us from the Bosom of his Father, to assume our Nature, and therein to make Expiation for our Sins ; to consecrate for us a new and living Way through the Veil of his own Flesh, into the Heavenly Sanctuary ; and by the Light of his Doctrine, and the Footsteps of his Example, to guide and direct us thither ? What less than the same Goodness, could send down the Holy Spirit to us, to instruct and teach us, to persuade and admonish us, and thereby to cultivate our rank and degenerate Natures, in which there is such strong Aversion to all the Heavenly Enjoyments, and to render us fit for the glorious Inheritance of the Saints in Light ? In a Word, What less than an Infinite Goodness could thus industriously employ the whole Sacred Trinity, in contriving, preparing, and accomplishing our everlasting Happiness,

by such amazing, such refin'd and such expressive Methods of Mercy : For verily, when I set my self to consider the mighty Things which God hath done to make us happy, I seem to be looking down from some stupendous Precipice, whose Height fills me with a sacred Horror, that turns my Head, confounds my Understanding, and almost oversets my Reason ; so that I am forc'd to cry out sometimes with the Psalmist, *Lord, what is Man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou visitest him* with such astonishing Favour : And sometimes with St. Paul, with a little more Variation ; *O the Depth of the Riches, of the Goodness, and Bounty of God ! how unsearchable are his Designs of Mercy, and his Ways of Beneficence past finding out.*

Thirdly, Consider the generous Freedom of the Divine Benefits on God's part. Even the noblest Benefactors among Men have great Intermixtures of Selfishness with their Beneficence : For either they gratifie their own Vanity with it, and Affectation of popular Applause, or they rid themselves of the troublesome Importunity, or ease their yearning Bowels of their own Compassion, or hope to secure themselves, a firm and lasting Interest in those they do good to : And even those who act from the nobler Principles of Religion, and do good in Submission to God, and in Conformity to his Nature, are not so utterly divested of these selfish Regards, but that they many times intermingle 'em even with their purest Intentions ; and even whilst they act upon those Religious Principles, it is all along in prospect of their own everlasting Happiness. Thus we poor Creatures, even in our most pious and generous Beneficences, are by the Sence of our own Want and Indigency, continually byass'd towards our own Want and Interest, either temporal, or eternal, or both. But in God, who wants nothing, but is self sufficient and infinitely happy in his own infinite Perfections, Matters are far otherwise ; he seeks nothing without himself, because he wants nothing, and so can have no Self end in any Action *ad extra* : From all the Benefits that he heaps upon us, he can reap no other Advantage, but only the Satisfaction of doing Good and the Gratification of the infinite Generosity of his Nature. So that his own Action is his End, and he doth Good merely for doing Good's sake. He is neither compell'd to it by Necessity, nor oblig'd to it by any other Law but that of his own Nature. He is neither wearied nor worried, into it, either by our Importunity, or by any painful Sence he hath of our Misery. He is neither flattered by our Promises, nor indear'd by our Deserts, nor brib'd by any Prospect he hath of future Advantage to himself ; but being absolute Master of his own Actions, and sole Counsellor and Law giver to himself, being the most perfectly independent and all-sufficient Source of his own Happiness, beyond which he cannot so much as desire, or expect, or hope, being infallibly secure, that nothing which either we, or any other Creature, can do, either for, or against him, can either add to, or subtract from, his essential Glory and Beatitude : Being all this, I say, and a thousand times more than all this, from an uninterested Bounty, and pure good Will and Generosity of Nature ; he delights to do us Good, heaps Benefit after Benefit upon us, for no other End but to benefit us ; and in plentiful Showers is continually pouring down his Graces and Favours upon us, purely that he may profit and please us, and if possible, content and satisfy us, and render us happy both here and hereafter. This is all the Return he expects for his Benefits ; and if he can but do us good by them, he hath his End, and is gratified to the utmost of his Expectations. O, the boundless Freedom of the Goodness of God towards us, that without any other Aim but to do us good, lets forth it self into such plentiful Effusions ! How excellent is thy Loving-kindness, O Lord, how indearing are thy Favours ! Who can rehearse thy noble Acts ! Who can shew forth all thy Praise ! Who, with such an unparallel'd Frankness and Generosity of Soul art continually multiplying thy Benefits upon us.

Fourthly, Consider the great Immerit and Undeservedness of God's Benefits on our parts. Considering the Number and Greatness of God's Mercies and Favours to us ; a Stranger to Mankind would be prone to imagine, that by our extra-
ordi-

ordinary Services, we had laid some vast Obligation upon God, for which he esteem'd himself so deeply indebted to us, that nothing within the compass of an infinite Goodness, could be too great a Re-payment : But, God knows, the Case is far otherwise : For instead of obliging him to be kind to us, we have so ungratefully requited his Kindness; and our Carriage towards him hath been so forward and perverse, under the most endearing Expressions of his Goodness, that were he not as infinite in Patience, as he is in Justice and Power, we had long since provok'd him to extirpate the whole Race of us from the Face of the Earth, and to consign us our Portion with our Fellow-Rebels, the Devils, in everlasting Horror and Despair : For instead of acknowledging his manifold Favours by our dutiful Behaviour, which is the most acceptable Return we can make of them, as if it had been as much our care to affront and provoke him, as it is his to oblige us by perpetual Beneficence. We treat our own base Lusts, which are the only Things he hateth, with his Mercies and Favours; we give his Bread to our Gluttony, his Drink to our Intemperance, his Cloaths to our Pride and Vanity : He lends us Breath, and we blaspheme him with it; he inspires us with Wit and Understanding, and we expose and ridicule him with it; he gives us Health and Strength, and we employ it against him in Wantonness and Luxury. And thus we basely sacrifice his Favours to the Devil : And tho' we do not all of us, thus openly outrage him with his own Benefits; yet how few are there that employ 'em to those good Ends and Purposes for which he designs and bestows 'em? How little Good do we with 'em to others? And how little the better are we for 'em our selves? How cold and indifferent are we upon the Receipt of 'em? How slothful in the Improvement of 'em? How selfish in the Use and Enjoyment of 'em? And what lame and wretched Returns do we commonly make of 'em? And yet for all this, O Wonder of Goodness! God is not at all a weary of doing good to us; but doth not only still continue to us his common and standing Benefits, such as the Light and Heat of the Sun, the Fruits of the Earth, and the Comforts of the Elements, together with a strong, and healthful, and vigorous Capacity of enjoying 'em; but also those peculiar Favours which respect our everlasting Well-being, viz. The Instructions of his Word, and the Refreshments of his Sacraments, and the Assistances of his Spirit; which by a thousand invisible Arts and Methods of Kindness which we take no notice of, but rather resist and oppose, doth still drive on the great Design of making us everlastingly happy : The Consideration whereof, if we have any Spark of Ingenuity in us, cannot but inflame our Souls with Gratitude and Praise.

Fifthly, and Lastly, Consider the condescending Manner of God's bestowing his Benefits upon us : For tho' it be infinite Condescension in him to think of us, who are plac'd so far beneath his Thoughts, who are but Worms crawling under his Feet, and whom he can crush into nothing at his Pleasure; though he dwells on high, as the Psalmist truly and emphatically expresses it, infinitely blessed in his own native Glories and Perfections, and is an all-sufficient Prospect and Entertainment to himself; yet he not only *humbles himself to behold the Things that are done in Heaven and Earth*; but also humbles himself to behold even us, to provide for us, and to take as much care of us as if our Concerns were his own; nay, he humbles himself so far, as to treat us as our Friend, as if we stood upon the same Level with him; and espouses our Interest as if it were his own, and as if he could not be happy without our being so; yea, farther yet, he treats us as if we were his Superiours; places us upon the Throne, as it were, and himself at the Footstool, and entreats and supplicates to admit of his Love and accept of his Favours; he sends Ambassadors of Peace to us, to sue for our Amity, and to *beseech us to be reconciled to him*. O blessed God, what Injury didst thou ever do us, that thou shouldest address to us for Reconciliation! That we should sue to thee indeed, who have injured and affronted thee beyond the Patience of any but a God, to endure, is doubtless, the most just and reasonable thing in the World : But that thou should'st sue to us, who never didst any thing but Goodness to us, who hast obliged us beyond all our Capacities of repaying thee, who hast been kind to us even to

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Wonder and Astonishment : And this not only without our Desert, but after our highest Affronts, and notwithstanding our most disingenuous Provocations to the contrary. O Blessed God ! What amazing Condescensions are these ! For when after all his kind Attempts to prevail upon our Obstinacy, gratefully to accept his Favours, and by so doing, to improve them to our own everlasting Advantage ; he finds we are incurably determin'd to the contrary ; with what passionate Regrets, and Yernings, and Turning of Bowels, doth he discharge us from his paternal Care, and abandon us to the dire Effects of our own Folly ? Such *wondrous Stoops* of the Divine Majesty would tempt one to think, did we not demonstrably know the contrary, that God hath as much need of us, as we have of his Favours ; and that it is as much for his Good, that we should thankfully receive them, as it is for ours, that he should generously bestow them. But after all this, we do most certainly know, if we know any thing of the Nature of God, that it can be nothing but pure Goodness and Generosity of Nature, that obliges and determines him to these *amazing Condescensions*. Which, if we weigh in the Balance of a just Consideration, together with the foregoing Motives, cannot fail, if we have any Spark, either of Modesty, Ingenuity, or even Humanity, remaining in us, to determine us to follow the excellent Advice of the Psalmist in the Text ; *Offer unto God Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the Most High.*

New to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, Majesty and Dominion, from this time forth, and for evermore. Amen.

Practical

Practical Discourses

UPON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

DISCOURSE I.

UPON

I TIMOTHY iv. 8.

Bodily Exercise profiteth little ; but Godliness is profitable unto all things, having Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.

THE great Design of *Christianity* being to promote our *future Happiness*, and qualifie us for it ; Things are more or less valuable in its Esteem, as they more or less conduce to this *great and excellent End*. And hence the Apostle tells us, that of all the Vertues *Christianity* obliges us to, *Charity is the greatest*, 1 Cor. 13. 13. that is, a sincere Love of God, and an universal good Will to Men : And the greatest it is upon this Account ; because of all Vertues, it is most *congenial* to the *Heavenly State* ; that being a State of *endless Love*, and *pure Friendship* : And all other Vertues are valu'd more or less proportionably, as they partake of this Vertue of *Charity*. To give *Worth* to our *Faith*, it is necessary it should *work by Love*, Galat. 5. 6. To make our *Knowledge* acceptable, it is necessary it should run into *Love*, 1 Cor. 8. 2, 3. Yea, without *Charity* the Gift of *Miracles*, *Almsgiving*, and *Martyrdom* it self, are Things of *no Value* in the Accounts of *Christianity*, 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2, 3. Nay, so much is this great Vertue designed by the Christian Religion, that the Apostle tells us, that the *End of the Commandment is Charity*, 1 Tim. 1. 5. That is, all the *Duties* which the Commandment enjoyns, are designed only as *Means* to advance and perfect our Love to God and Men : And all *Means*, you know, are more or less excellent, proportionably, as they conduce to the *Ends* they are designed for. Wherefore since our *future Happiness* is the ultimate *End* of *Christianity*, and universal *Love* our most necessary *Qualifications* for it, it necessarily follows, that the *Goodness* of all Religious *Means* consists in their Aptitude to *abstract* and *purifie* our Affections ; to *exalt* and *sublimate* our Love, and to *propagate* in us that Godlike and Heavenly Temper, which is so necessary to *qualifie* us for the Enjoyment of God and Heaven. But alas ! how ordinary is it for Men to mistake their *Means* for their *Ends* ; and to value themselves upon doing those things, which, if they be not directed to a farther *End*, are altogether insignificant ; accounting those things to be *absolutely* good, which are but *relatively* so ; and which, unless they

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conduce to that which is good, are perfectly *indifferent*. Of which we have too many sad Instances among our selves: For how many are there, who though they have *nothing* else to prize themselves for, but only of their keeping of *Fasts*, and looking *solemnly* on a *Sunday*, their hearing so many *Sermons*, and numbering so many *Prayers*; are yet bloated with as *high Conceits* of their own Sanctity and Godliness, as if they had commenced *Saints*, and were arrived to the highest degrees of *Perfection*: And tho' *Pride* and *Malice*, *Covetousness* and *Ambition*, are the only *Graces* they are eminent in; yet you shall see these empty wretched Things preach'd upon the Pinnacle of *Self-Conceit*, and from thence looking down upon poor *moral* Mortals, as if they were Things of an *inferiour Species*, not worthy to be reckoned in the same *Class* of Beings with themselves. Such flaunting Hypocrites, it seems, there have always been; and in these latter Times it is foretold they should abound: For the Apostle tells us 1 *Tim.* 4. 1. that *the Spirit speaketh expressly*, that in the latter Ages there should arise a sort of People, who *departing from the Faith*, should give heed to *seducing Spirits and Doctrines of Devils*; who should *forbid Marriage*, and *command Abstinence from Meats*, *Verf.* 3. that is, as I suppose, should place all their Religion in *outward* and *bodily* Severities, which at best, are only *Means* and *Instruments* of Religion; and that in these they should pride themselves, as if they were the only *Saints* of the Age: Whereas, in truth, they would prove the rankest *Hypocrites* that ever appeared in a Religious Vizard. And of these he exhorts *Timothy* carefully to *forewarn* his Flock, and for his own part, to *reject* their prophane and ridiculous Fables; and rather to exercise himself in true *substantial* Godliness, than in such *outward bodily* Rigors and Severities: For which he subjoyns this general Reason; *for bodily exercise profiteth little*; that is, *mere outward* bodily Exercise in Religion, abstracted from *inward* Piety and Godliness, is of very little Avail in a Religious Account: For the *bodily* Exercise here spoken of, it seems, was such as had some *little* Profit attending it, and consequently was such as had some *general* Tendency to Good, and was improvable to *some* Advantage, had it been *wisely* manag'd and directed. For *περὶ ὀλίγον*, here translated *little*, is not so to be understood, as if it signified *nothing*; because it is here opposed to something that is greater, *viz.* to *περὶ πάντα*: *Bodily Exercise profiteth little, but Godliness is profitable for all things*; and therefore this *bodily* Exercise must profit *something*, though less than *Godliness*, which is profitable for *all* things: As, when *Plato* says, *Σωκράτης ἐπὶ ὀλίγον φρονίμον ἀλλήλους ἐπιπολεῖ*, *Socrates must be a little attended, but Truth a great deal more*. And if it be such an Exercise as doth profit a *little*, then it must be such as is *Religious*, and is of some *small* account in Religion. In the Prosecution of this Subject therefore I shall do these two things:

- I. Shew you what this *outward* or *bodily* Exercise in Religion is.
- II. In what Cases it is that it *profits* little.

I. Wherein doth this *bodily* Exercise consist? I answer, it consists in these six things:

1. In an outward visible *Profession* of Religion.
2. In *bodily Severities* upon Religious Accounts.
3. In *bodily Passions* in Religion.
4. In *bodily Worship*.
5. In *Bodily Fluency* and *Volubility* in Religious Exercises.
6. In a mere outward *Form* or *Round* of Religious Duties.

1. It consists in an outward visible *Profession* of Religion. That we should make a visible *Profession* of the true Religion, when it is sufficiently proposed to us, is an unquestionable *Duty*: And that for this Reason; because not to *profess visibly* what we believe to be the true Religion, is an open *disowning* of God, who is the immediate Object of all true Religion. For he that *believes* that this is the Will

Will of God, and yet is either *ashamed* or *afraid* openly to *avow* and *acknowledge* it; declares that he is either *ashamed* of God, or that he fears *Man* more than *God*; both which are highly impious. Besides, by our *visible* owning of Religion, we propose it to *others*, who by our *Example* may be persuaded to embrace it as well as we: And it is our Duty, not only to *entertain* the true Religion our *selves*, but so far as in us lies, to *propagate* it to *others*; that so diffusing our *Light* round about us, others may be *directed* to Heaven by it, as well as our *selves*. This therefore is of *some* Account with God, that we *visibly* profess the true Religion; but if this be *all* we do, it will profit us but very little. For if we do not own our Religion in our *Actions*, while we profess it in our *Words*, we contradict our *selves*; our *Practice* gives the Lye to our *Creed*, and our wicked *Lives* baffle our holy *Profession*: For while a Man acts *contrary* to the Rules of his Religion, he doth as effectually *disown* it, as if he should openly *renounce* his Baptism, and make a publick *Revocation* of Christianity. For as our *Profession* of Religion is performed by a *visible* Signification of our Belief of it; and as this may be signified by our *Actions*, as well as our *Words*; so in effect, we do *renounce* Religion, when we give any *visible* Signification that we do *not* believe it; and this we do, as well when we *act* like Infidels, as when by *Words* we declare our Infidelity. For by our *Deeds* we may signify our Minds, as well as by our *Words*; and he that *acts* as if he did *not* believe, doth give a more *convincing* Argument to his Infidelity, than all his *Words* or *Professions* can be to the contrary; because it is rationally supposable, that a Man will rather *pretend* to believe what he doth not, than that he will *act* contrary to his own Belief and Judgment; it being a greater Degree of *Violence* to our *selves*, to *act* contrary to what we do believe, than to *pretend* to believe what we do not. So that it is not all our *Talk* and *verbal* owning of Religion, that will serve the End of a *visible* Profession; which is, so to own God as to induce *others* to own him as well as our *selves*; because he that denies God in his *Actions*, will never be able to induce others to believe that he doth *sincerely* own him in his *Words* and *Professions*. Wherefore unless we will *live up* to the Rules of our Religion, we were as good not to make any *visible* Profession of it: For our *Profession* will serve no good Ends of Religion. It may indeed, *disgrace* it in the Opinion of those who measure its Goodness by the *Lives* of its Votaries: For either they will think that our Religion *teaches* us to live as we do, and that will make them *allow* it; or else they will imagine that notwithstanding our *Profession*, we do *not* believe it, and that will make them *suspect* it to be a Cheat and Imposture. So that for any *Good* Christianity is like to reap from *wicked* Christians professing it, it were highly desirable that they would *renounce* their Baptism, and openly *declare* themselves Atheists and Infidels; because by their *Actions* they blaspheme the Religion they profess; and by *assuming* to themselves the holy Name of Christians, they do but more openly *profane* it.

2. Another sort of *bodily* Exercise, that is of *some*, though but *little* Account in Religion; is our voluntary undergoing of *bodily* Rigours or Severities upon the score of Religion. There is doubtless, a very *wise* Use to be made of *bodily* Severities in Religion, provided they be but used with that *Prudence* and *Caution* as they ought to be: For they are excellent Remedies against many of our inordinate *fleshly* Inclinations, to tame our extravagant *Appetites*, and to render them more tractable to the Commands of *Reason* and *Religion*: Besides, that in the general, they are of singular Use to wean our Souls from the Pleasures of the *Body*, which do often *corrupt* the Palate of the *Mind*, and render it *incapable* of relishing *divine* Enjoyments. For if we *indulge* to our *Appetites* all those *lawful* Pleasures which they crave, our Souls will be apt to contract *too great* a Familiarity with the *Flesh*, and to be so taken up by the Delights and Satisfaction of it, as to neglect those *diviner* Pleasures for which they were created, and which are more *natural* and *congenial* to them: And considering, that in our *future* State we must live without these *Bodies*, and take leave of all the Pleasures of them, it is very requisite that we should now beforehand, *wean* and *abstract* our *selves*

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from the Enjoyments of *corporeal* Sence ; that so when we come to *part* with them, we may know how to be *happy* without them, and be fit to live the Lives of *naked* Spirits. • And therefore we find, that there has scarce been *any* Religion whatsoever, pretending to qualify Men for *another* Life, but hath imposed *Fasting* and *Abstinence*, and other bodily *Severities*, as proper Means to *lustrate* and *purifie* the Mind, and to *prepare* it for immediate *Converses* with God and separated Spirits ; but then the Consequence was, that the over-strict *Imposition* of these *Instruments* of Religion, occasioned a World of *Superstition* : For being so strictly imposed, they obtain'd so far in the Opinion of the World, as to be reckon'd among the *Essentials* of Religion, and counted absolutely good, and in their own *Nature* pleasing and grateful unto God ; which possibly, by degrees introduced those *εξίστα μυστήρια*, horrid and bloody Mysteries, into the *Heathen Religion*. For Mankind being once possessed with such an Opinion, of God, as to think he was pleased and delighted to see his poor Creatures *afflict* and punish themselves ; it was easie from thence to infer, that he would be much more pleased to see them *Butcher* themselves, and sprinkle his Altars with their own *Blood*. And as this *over weaning* Opinion did probably introduce *human Sacrifices* into the *Heathen Religion* ; so it is certain, that it hath introduced sundry false Doctrines into the *Romish* ; as particularly, that *Fasting* and *Whipping* our selves, and going on *Pilgrimages*, are *meritorious* Things ; that by them we *expiate* our Sins, and make *Satisfaction* to the Justice of God ; as if the Guilt that binds us over to *eternal* Perdition, were to be expiated by a sound *Whipping* ; or a *short Pilgrimage* were a proportionable Commutation for the *eternal Penance* of Hell-Fire. But these are the vain Imaginations of *Men*, who would feign impose Laws upon *God*, and prescribe to him the *Measures* of Punishment ; who would *do* as wickedly as they please, and *suffer* what they please for so doing. But let us not deceive our selves ; if we will choose to *sin*, it is reasonable that that *God*, whom we offend by our Sin, should choose and appoint our *Punishment*. It is by no means fit that *Criminals* should be their own *Judges* : For if they were, they would have very little Reason to be afraid of sinning, because they would be oblig'd to *suffer* no more for it than what they *pleased* themselves ! But the Right of *punishing* is in the offended *Party* ; and therefore if we will offend God by violating his Laws, we have no Right to choose our own *Penance* ; but must, whether we will or no submit to what *He* thinks fit to inflict upon us ; and what that is, he hath told us beforehand, even *everlasting* Expulsion from his Presence into the Society and Portion of Devils, and damned Spirits. So that for us to expect to atone and satisfy God, by little *voluntary* Penances of our own ; is just as reasonable, as if a Murderer should cut off his little Finger, and thereupon expect to be excused from the Penalty of the Law.

And as these *bodily Severities* are no *Expiations* of our Sins ; so neither are they in their own *Nature* *pleasing* and *grateful* unto God : For he is a *good* God, and an universal *Lover* of all his Creation ; and consequently, can be no farther *pleased* with the Sufferings and Afflictions of any of his Creatures, than as they are *necessary* either to do *them* good, or to make them exemplary to *others*, or to vindicate the *Honour* of his own violated Laws : Neither of which Ends are served by *voluntary* Penances and Severities, as such, if they be not subordinated to the Ends of *Vertue* and *Religion*. For what can *Fasting* signify, if it be not design'd to famish our *Lusts* ? Can our hungry Bowels be a *delightful* Spectacle to that God who feeds the young Ravens, and takes so much care to provide for all his Creation ? What *Vertue* is there in the Chastening of our *Bodies*, if it be not intended to humble and mortifie our *Souls* ? Do we think that that God, who is so zealous of our *Welfare*, can be recreated with our *Miseries*, or take Pleasure in our *tragical Locks*, and *bloody Shoulders* ? 'Tis true, so far as these things are *Instruments* of Good to us, they are pleasing unto God, even as all other *Instruments* of Religion ; but it is not the suffering of our *Bodies* he is pleased with, but the Good which it doth our *Souls* : But if they do our *Souls* no good, if they do not purifie our *Affections*, and wean us from fleshly *Desires*, and make us more fit for the heavenly State, they are as insignificant in the Account of God, as the paring of our Nails, or the clipping of our Hair.

3. Another sort of these *Bodily Exercises* that are of *some*, though but *little* account in Religion, is *bodily Passions* in Religion. There is, I confess, an excellent Use to be made of our *bodily Passions* in the Exercise of our Religion, provided we do not place our Religion, in them : For if we do, they will betray us into the grossest *Cheats* and *Impostures*. For in the general, we find, that our *Passions* do wing our *intellectual* Faculties, and render them more *intense* and *expedite* in their Operations. For whilst the *Soul* and *Body* are united to one another, there is a *mutual* Reflowing and Communication of *Passions* between them ; insomuch that whensoever the *Soul* is any ways affected with any Object, there immediately follows a suitable Perturbation or Passion in the *Body* ; and then this Passion of the *Body*, as it is grateful or ingrateful to it, doth more vigorously affect the *Soul* with Love or Averfation ; and then the *Soul* being thus re-affected and incited by the *bodily Passion*, will more vehemently pursue or shun the Object which caused its first Motion or Affection. When therefore our Souls and Bodies do thus sympathize with each other in the Exercises of Religion, we must necessarily perform them with greater Vigour and Intention.

But to make this more plain to you, I will briefly instance in those four great *Passions* of Religion, viz. Love, and Hatred, and Sorrow, and Joy. As for that of Love ; when the Soul is affected with God, or Vertue, or any other amiable Objects of Religion ; immediately there follows a sweet and grateful Passion in the Body. For the Heart being dilated towards the beloved Object, puts the Blood and Spirits into a free and placid Motion, which diffuses a certain agreeable Heat into the Breast, and invigorates the Brain with a Flood of active Spirits ; and then the Soul being sensible of this grateful Emotion in the Body, is thereby more vigorously incited to pursue those amiable Objects wherewith she was first affected. And so for Hatred : When the Soul is practically convinced by the Arguments of Religion, of the Odiousness of any Evil it forbids, the Enmity and Hatred she hath towards it, causes an anxious Contradiction of the Heart, and Compression of the Animal Spirits ; which produces a Chilness in the Breast, a retarding of the Blood, and an unequal Motion of the Pulse ; and then the Soul sympathizing with the Body, cannot but be sensible of this ungrateful Passion it is put into ; which must needs add to her Hatred of those odious Objects which were the Cause of it, and cause her more vehemently to shun and avoid them. So again, when the Soul is moved to Sorrow and Repentance for any past Sins and Miscarriages, the sad Regrets she suffers within her self, produce a very doleful Passion in the Body ; such as pinches the Heart, congeals the Blood, and causes an ungrateful Langour of the Spirits ; and then by compassionating her grieved Consort, she is thereby excited to a higher Degree of Displeasure against those Sins that caused its Grief and Disturbance. Lastly, when the Soul is joyed and delighted with any religious Object, or Exercise ; by that sweet Complacency she enjoys within her self, there is produced a most pleasant Emotion in the Body, the Animal Spirits flowing to the Heart in an equal and placid Stream ; where being arriv'd through its dilated Orifices, they sooth and tickle it into a most sensible Pleasure ; and then the Soul being affected by the Body's Pleasure, doth from thence derive an additional Joy, which doth more vigorously encourage her to pursue those Objects, and continue those Exercises from whence her Original Joy proceeded.

So that, you see, that by reason of that perpetual Intercourse there is between our Souls and our Bodies, there is an excellent Use even of our sensitive Passions in Religion. And it cannot be denied, but that a gentle Temper of Body, whose Passions are soft, and easie, and ductile, and apt to be commoved with the Soul, may be of great advantage to our Religious Exercises ; because whensoever it is religiously affected, its Passions will be apt to intend and quicken the Affections of the Soul, and to render them more vigorous and active : But farther than this, they are of no Account at all in Religion. For as there are many Men who are sincerely good, that yet cannot raise their sensitive Passions in their religious Exercises ;

from the Enjoyments of *corporeal* Sence ; that so when we come to *part* with them, we may know how to be *happy* without them, and be fit to live the Lives of *naked* Spirits. • And therefore we find, that there has scarce been *any* Religion what-soever, pretending to qualifie Men for *another* Life, but hath imposed *Fasting* and *Abstinence*, and other bodily *Severities*, as proper Means to *lustrate* and *purifie* the Mind, and to *prepare* it for immediate Converſes with God and ſeparated Spirits ; but then the Conſequence was, that the over-ſtrict *Impoſition* of theſe *Inſtrumentals* of Religion, occaſioned a World of *Superſtition* : For being ſo ſtrictly impoſed, they obtain'd ſo far in the Opinion of the World, as to be reckon'd among the *Essentials* of Religion ; and counted absolutely good, and in their own Nature pleaſing and grateful unto God ; which poſſibly, by degrees introduced thoſe *pernicious*, horrid and bloody Myſteries, into the *Heathen Religion*. For Mankind being once poſſeſſed with ſuch an Opinion, of God, as to think he was pleaſed and delighted to ſee his poor Creatures *afflict* and puniſh themſelves ; it was eaſie from thence to infer, that he would be much more pleaſed to ſee them *Butcher* themſelves, and ſprinkle his Altars with their own *Blood*. And as this *over weaning* Opinion did probably introduce *human Sacrifices* into the *Heathen Religion* ; ſo it is certain, that it hath introduced ſundry falſe Doctrines into the *Romiſh* ; as particularly, that *Faſting* and *Whipping* our ſelves, and going on *Pilgrimages*, are *meritorious* Things ; that by them we *expiate* our Sins, and make *Satisfaction* to the Juſtice of God ; as if the Guilt that binds us over to *eternal* Perdition, were to be expiated by a ſound *Whipping* ; or a *ſhort Pilgrimage* were a proportionable Commutation for the *eternal Penance* of Hell-Fire. But theſe are the vain Imaginations of *Men*, who would feign impoſe Laws upon God, and preſcribe to him the *Meaſures* of Punishment ; who would *do* as wickedly as they pleaſe, and *suffer* what they pleaſe for ſo doing. But let us not deceive our ſelves ; if we will chooſe to *ſin*, it is reaſonable that that God, whom we offend by our Sin, ſhould chooſe and appoint our *Puniſhment*. It is by no means fit that *Criminals* ſhould be their own *Judges* : For if they were, they would have very little Reaſon to be afraid of ſinning ; becauſe they would be oblig'd to *suffer* no more for it than what they *pleaſed* themſelves ! But the Right of *puniſhing* is in the offend-ed Party ; and therefore if we will offend God by violating his Laws, we have no Right to chooſe our own *Penance* ; but muſt, whether we will or no, ſubmit to what *He* thinks fit to inflict upon us ; and what that is, he hath told us beforehand, even *ever-laſting* Expulſion from his Preſence into the Society and Portion of Devils, and dam-ned Spirits. So that for us to expect to atone and ſatisſie God, by little *voluntary* Penances of our own ; is juſt as reaſonable, as if a Murderer ſhould cut off his little Finger, and thereupon expect to be excuſed from the Penalty of the Law.

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So that, you see, that by reason of that perpetual Intercourse there is between our Souls and our Bodies, there is an excellent Use even of our sensitive Passions in Religion. And it cannot be denied, but that a gentle Temper of *Body*, whose Passions are soft, and easie, and ductile, and apt to be commoved with the *Soul*, may be of great advantage to our Religious Exercises; because whensoever it is religiously affected, its Passions will be apt to intend and quicken the Affections of the *Soul*, and to render them more vigorous and active: But farther than this, they are of no Account at all in Religion. For as there are many Men who are sincerely good, that yet cannot raise their sensitive Passions in their religious Exercises;

that are heartily *sorry* for their Sins, and yet cannot *weep* for them; that do entirely *love* God, and *delight* in his Service; and yet cannot put their Blood and Spirits into the *enraving* Emotions of *sensitive* Love and Joy: So on the other hand, there are many gross *Hypocrites* that have not one Dram of *true* Piety in them, who yet in their Religious Exercises can put themselves into wondrous *Transports* of *bodily* Passion, that can *pour* out their Confession in Floods of *Tears*, and cause their Hearts to dilate into *Raptures* of *sensitive* Love, and their Spirits to tickle them into *Ecstasies* of Joy; which is purely to be resolved into the *different* Tempers of Mens Bodies; some Tempers being naturally so *calm* and *sedate*, as that they are scarce capable of being disturbed into a Passion; others again so *soft*, and *tender*, and *impressible*, that the most frivolous Fancy is able to raise a Commotion in them. And hence we see, that some People can *weep* most heartily at the Misfortunes of Lovers in *Plays* and *Romances*; and as much *rejoyce* at their good Successes, though they know that both are *Fictions*, and mere *Idea's* of *Fancy*: Whereas others can scarce shed a *Tear* or raise a *sensitive* Joy at the *real* Calamities or Prosperities of a *Friend*; whom yet they love a great deal more than these Men can possibly do their *feigned* and *Romantick* Heroes. And yet alas, how very often do Men place the *whole* of their Religion in these *mechanical* Motions of their *Blood* and *Spirits*; that think they are exceeding *good*, if they can but chase themselves into a devout *Passion*; and that it is an infallible Sign of *Godliness* that their Blood and Spirits are easily *moved* by Religious *Idea's*, and apt to be *elevated* or *dejected* according as sad or joyous Arguments are *pathetically* represented to their *Fancies*: And though they do not understand the *Argument*; or, which is all one to them, though that which is delivered for Argument, is mere *Gibberish*, and insignificant *Canting*, that hath nothing of *Argument* or *Reality* in it; only some *empty Fiction* is conveyed to their Fancies by a musical Voice in *fanciful Expressions*; yet because they are affected by it, and it raises a *sensible* Perturbation in their *Blood* and *Spirits*, they presently conclude it to be an *Income* of God, and an infallible Token of his *special Love* and *Favour* to them: As if it were a Sign of *Godliness*, and a Mark of *God's Favorites*, to be affected with *Nonsense*, feathered with soft and delicate Phrases, and pointed with *pathetick* Accents.

Thus there are some Men who believe themselves to be *converted*, merely because they have run through all the Stages of *Passion*, in that new Road of *Artificial Conversion* which some modern Authors have found out: For according as the *Work of Conversion* hath been describ'd by some modern Authors, it is wholly placed in so many different Scenes of *Passion*. For first, a Man must pass under the Discipline of the *Law*, and the Spirit of *Bondage*; that is, he must be *frightened* into a Sence of his lost and undone Condition; and in this Sence he must *grieve* bitterly for his Sins as the *Causes* of his Ruin and Perdition: And this is that which they call *Conviction* and *Compunction*. From hence he must proceed into the *Evangelical* State, and pass into the Spirit of *Adoption*, the Entrance of which is *Contrition* or *Humiliation*; which consists in an *ingenuous* Sorrow for Sin, proceeding from a *passionate* Sence of *Love* and *Goodness*; and then having acted over all these mournful *Passions*, he embraces and lays hold upon *Christ*, which is the concluding Scene; and is altogether made up of *Joy* and *Exultation*; and so the *Work of Conversion* is *finished*. Now, though I do not at all deny, but to the Conversion of an *habitual* Sinner, it is indispensably necessary, that he should be *convinc'd* of his Danger, and deeply *affected* with Sorrow and Remorse for his Folly and Wickedness; (and therefore would not be so understood, as if I intended to *discountenance* these *holy* Passions, which are such necessary *Introductions* to a sincere Conversion:) Yet neither do I doubt, but by the help of a *melancholy* *Fancy*, attended with soft and easie Passions, a Man may perform all these *Parts* of Conversion, and yet be never the better for it: For many times these *Passions* are only the necessary Effects of a *diseased* *Fancy*, and are altogether as *mechanical* as the Beating of our *Pulse*, or the Circulation of our *Blood*. And hence we see, that this kind of *Conversion*, which wholly consists of *bodily* *Passions*, doth commonly both begin and end with some languishing Distemper of the *Body*, in which the

the *Fancy* is over-clouded, and the Motion of the *Blood* and *Spirits* retarded by the Prevalence of *black* and *melancholy* Humours; which being once evacuated, the Man's Body returns again to its *former* Temper; and upon this he becomes the *same* Man again that he was before his *pretended Conversion*. And accordingly, it is observed by those very Persons who place the whole Work of Conversion in these *Mechanical* Passions, that generally, after the *Pangs* of Regeneration are over, their Converts grow *cold*, and *careless*, and *remiss* in Religion; and so like to what they were in the State of *Nature*, that you would hardly believe they had ever been *converted*: Which is a plain Evidence, that this sort of *Conversion* doth not reach the *Soul*; that it doth not alter our *practical* Judgment of things, nor rationally determine our Wills to *new Choices* and *Resolutions*; and consequently that it is nothing but a mere Train of *sensitive* Passions *mechanically* excited by the *Fancy*. And hence you may observe in the Modern Stories of our *Religious Melancholians*, that they commonly pass out of one *Passion* into another, without any manner of *Reasoning* and *Discourse*: Now they are in the Depths of *Grief* and *Despair*; by and by, upon the Pinnacle of *Joy* and *Assurance*; and yet they are the *same Men*, neither *better* nor *worse*, when they do *despair*, as when they are *assured*; and consequently have no more Reason to be *assured* now, than they had when they were encompassed with all the Horrors of *Desperation*. For the only Reason any Man hath to be *assured* of God's Love, is his *Likeness* and *Conformity* to Him; which is that alone which *endears* us unto God, and entitles us to the Promise of his *Favour*. And yet, though these Men do not pretend to be *better*, or more *Godlike* now they are *assured*, than they were when they *despaired*; yet their Hearts are overwhelmed with Floods of *sensitive* Joy, and they are strangely comforted, they know not *how*, or *wherefore*: And though while they were in *Despair*, they thought of those Promises and Motives of *Comfort* that now *ravish* and *transport* them, and had every whit as much Reason to lay claim to them too; yet then they lay like Cakes of Ice at their Hearts, without affording them the least Gleam of Warmth and Comfort: Which is a plain Evidence, that both their *Jays* and *Sorrows* are the Products of *bodily Temper*, and not of *Reason* and *Judgment*; because they pass out of one into the other, without any intervenient *Discourse*, and are agitated into contrary *Passions* whilst they are under the *same Rational* Motives; are dejected this Moment, and comforted the next; which argues, that their *Reason* hath no hand in their *Passions*: For if it had, they could never be so contrarily affected. Nor can it be supposed, that such *irrational* Passions are raised in them by the *Divine* Spirit; because He *ordinarily* works upon Men in an *Human* and *Rational* Way, beginning with their *Understandings*, and so persuading their *Wills*, and exciting their *Passions* by *Rational* Motives and Arguments: Those Passions therefore, that are not so excited, can be resolved into no other Principle, but that of *bodily Temper*. And accordingly, you may observe, that all this Train of *Passions*, wherein too many Men do place the *whole* of their *Conversion*, are necessarily connected and chained to one another: So that if you move but the first Link, all the rest will naturally follow; which is a plain Argument that they may be excited not only in a *free* and *rational*, but also in a *necessary* or *mechanical* way. As for Instance, Suppose these Men before their *pretended Conversion*, to have a good Dose of *Melancholy* in their Tempers, this will naturally dispose them to *terrible* and *mournful* Conceits: And being thus disposed, their tender *Fancies* are easily impressed with *dreadful* Images of the Wrath of God, and their own undone Condition: And according as the *Temper* of their Bodies is more or less disposed to *fear*; so this frightful Passion continues *longer* or *shorter* upon 'em: If it continues *longer*, it will by the *reiterated* Impressions of those dreadful Objects that first raised it, by degrees be heightened into *Horror* and *Desperation*; and when it is so, then the Man is under *Conviction* of his undone Condition, and under the *Terrors* of the Law, and the Spirit of Bondage; which according to the new Method, is always the *first Step* to Conversion. And when the *first Fury* of *Despair* is over, it naturally issues into a *deep Melancholy*, and there spends it self in woful Regrets,
and

and self-condemning Reflexions : And this is that which they call *Attrition*, or *Compunction* ; which is the next Step to be taken in this *Methodical* Way of *Conversion*.

And hence many People do continue many Years together in this *languishing* State ; in all which time they believe themselves to be under the Lash of the Law, and the Discipline of the *Spirit of Bondage* ; when, God knows, many times there is nothing in it but a mere *melancholy* Humour, tinctur'd and heighten'd with *dismal* Notions of Religion. But then, when the Melancholy begins to *disperse*, and to make way for the Spirits to flow into the Brain in a more *brisk* and *active* Torrent, and so to *warm* and *refresh* the drooping Fancy ; they will by degrees scatter those horrid Images and dismal Fancies of Religion, that rid the Imagination, and raised those Tragical Passions ; and so the Man will gradually emerge out of the *Spirit of Bondage*, into a more *Comfortable* and *Evangelical* Condition. For now his Fancy being something more *lightsome*, but still retaining some *Reliques* of its former Darknefs, will be disposed for *grateful*, as well as *dismal* Phantasms ; and to be impressed by *lovely* and *joyous*, as well as *terrible* and *mournful* Objects. So that, if now *God*, or *Christ*, or any other Object of Religion, be but represented to the Man in such a *Dress* of *Metaphors* and glistering *Allusions*, as is apt to affect his carnaliz'd Fancy, he will presently form such *charming* Conceits and *pleasant* Imaginations of them, as will necessarily put his Blood and Spirits into a most *amorous* Emotion towards them : So that now he shall seem inflamed with the Love of Christ, and fancy him twined in his *Arms* and *Embraces* : Whereas in *Reality*, the Thing he is so infinitely fond of, is nothing but an *Idol* of his own Fancy, a mere *Baby-Christ*, dress'd up by his own Imagination, in all the *Charms* of *sensual* Beauty, and furnish'd with *Smiles*, and *Kisses*, and *Careses*, and all the pretty *Indearments* of a doating Lover. And now the Man's Fancy being thus partly hung with fine Pictures of Christ, those *Reliques* of melancholy Vapours that are yet remaining in it ; will very much dispose it to sad and *mournful* Conceits ; especially when this *Idol* of Christ, which he so much doats upon, shall be represented as *weeping* over his Sins, and grieved at the *Unkindnesses* he shews him. And now, his Fancy being thus furnish'd with such a Mixture of *amorous* and *mournful* Imaginations, must necessarily beget in him a Mixture of *Love* and *Grief*, and cause him to mourn for his Sins ; because they make his Saviour grieve, whom he seems to love so dearly. And this is *Humiliation*, which is the *third* Stage in this imaginary Road of Conversion. And now the Man having set up so gay an Image of Christ in his Fancy, felt within himself such *sensible* Pangs of Love towards him, and Grief for the *Affronts* and *Unkindnesses* he hath offer'd him, his *amorous* Imagination will presently suggest to him, that doubtless, so sweet a Saviour cannot but be conquer'd with all these *passionate* Indearments, and smitten with a reciprocal Love, upon so many *feeling* Expressions of his Kindness towards him : And being possessed with this Imagination, he will presently fancy his dear Image of Christ into all the *Postures* of a transported Lover ; smiling upon him, and spreading out his Arms to embrace him : Upon which, there will follow such a sweet Effusion of his Spirits towards his enamour'd Saviour, that he will fancy himself to be leaping into his Arms, and rowling in his Bosom, and resting, and leaning, and relying upon him. And now his Fancy having carry'd him to his *Journey's End*, and lodged him in the *Embraces* of his Saviour, O the Joy and Ravishment ! He feels his Heart pant through *Excess* of Delight ; and ready to break with its own *Raptures*. And thus you see, how this whole Method of *Conversion* may be easily transacted by an *active* and *melancholy* Fancy.

And as it may be, so, I doubt not, but many times it is : For how many Men are there who strongly imagine themselves to have been *converted*, that yet are never the better for it, being still as averse unto *God* and true *Goodness*, as ever they were before ? Nay, and many times are so far from being better'd by their Conversion, that they are a great deal the worse for it : For instead of *forsaking* all Sin, which is that wherein true Conversion doth consist, they only shift their *Vices*, and many times in laying one Devil, they conjure up seven worse in the room

of it. Perhaps before they fancied themselves to have been converted, they were openly lewd and prophane; they would swear, and be drunk, and wallow in *Sensuality* and *Voluptuousness*: But notwithstanding these beastly and damnable Crimes, they had some very amiable Qualities in them: They were *courteous*, and *affable*, and *kind*, and *obliging*; *faithful* in their Professions, and *just* and *honest* in their Dealings: But now, alas! by passing through these dismal Stages of pretended Conversion, they have contracted such a Mass of *melancholy Humours*, as hath quite soured their sweet and lovely Tempers into *Pride* and *Envy*, *Peevishness* and *Faction*, *Insolence* and *Censoriousness*, and all the other Ingredients of a sullen and unsociable Nature. So that though now indeed they will not be openly lewd and prophane, as they were before; yet, which is a great deal worse, they will be *false* and *ill natur'd*, and *gripping* and *ungovernable*; and, which is worst of all, they will be all this while under the Disguise of Religion, and the Patronage of a deceiv'd Conscience: So that whereas their former Vices had only the Possession of their *Wills*, but not of their *Consciences*, these are seiz'd of both; which renders their Condition the more dangerous. For heretofore *Vertue* and *Religion* had a strong Party within them; there being a Law in their *Minds* that warred against the Law in their *Members*: But now all is subdued to the Dominion of their Sins, and their *Wills* and *Consciences*, like *Simeon* and *Levi*, become *Brethren in Iniquity*. Whilst therefore Men place their Religion in such *artificial Train* of *Passion*, they will be liable to all manner of *Cheats* and *Impostures*. For the Generality of Men being ignorant of the Power of *Melancholy*, and of the Frame and Structure of their own Bodies; if their Fancies are but tinctur'd with Religion, they will be apt to attribute every extraordinary Emotion they feel, to the immediate Influence of the Spirit of God; and to account that to be *Grace* and *Inspiration*, which is a mere necessary Effect of *Matter* and *Motion*: And being once possessed with this Conceit, they lie open to all the *Follies* of *Enthusiasm*: For now nothing will satisfy them, but *Heats* of *Fancy*, and *Transports* of *Passion*: And whilst they should be attending to the sober Dictates of *Scripture* and right *Reason*, they will be looking for *Incomes* and *Impulses*, and *secret Manifestations*; and consequently, will be apt to interpret every odd Whimsie for an inward Whisper from Heaven, and every brisk Emotion of their Spirits for an immediate Smile of God's Countenance; than which, I dare boldly say, there is nothing more *mischievous* to Religion, or contrary to the Life and Power of it. For Religion is a *wise*, a *still* and *silent* Thing, that consists not in *Frisks* of *Fancy*, and *Whirlwinds* of *Passion*; but in a *divine* Temper of *Mind*, and an universal Resignation of our *Wills* to God; and this, not only in intermittent *Fits* of *Passion*, but in the midst of *cool* Thoughts and *calm* Deliberations. For true Religion is a State of a *fixt* and *constant* Nature, that doth not come and go, like the Colours of a blushing Face; but is the *natural* and *true* Complexion of the Soul. How religious soever therefore we may be in our passionate *Heats* and *Transports*, it is altogether insignificant, unless the standing Temper of our Minds be *good*, and our Religion be settled in our Natures. For though it cannot be denied, but these our *bodily* Passions do profit something, as they are useful *Instruments* of Religion; yet, I think, it is very apparent from what hath been said, that he who places his Religion in them, doth but deceive his own Soul.

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and self condemning Reflexions : And this is that which they call *Attrition*, or *Compunction* ; which is the next Step to be taken in this *Methodical* Way of *Conversion*.

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to fix himself upon God with all the *united Vigour* of his Mind, which not being disturb'd with the *Difficulty* of expressing its Desires, will be the more at leisure to *intend* them, that so its Devotions may flow *secundo flumine*, in a more easie and undisturb'd Current: Besides which, I say, we all find by Experience, that *proper* and *fluent* Expressions are in their own Nature apt to *warm* and *heighten* our Affections; which nothing hath a greater Influence in, than the Charms of *pathetical Oratory*.

To be able therefore to word our *Prayers* in *proper* and *ready* Expressions, is of considerable *Advantage* to our *Devotions*; our *Words* being so apt to affect our *Minds*, and our *Passions* to keep time with the Musick of our own *Language*: And whilst we wear these *Bodies* about us, and our *Souls* are clogged and depressed with *fleshly Desires*, we have need enough to use all Arts and Advantages of *spiriting* and *enlivening* our Devotions. But yet, I confess, of all these *bodily Exercises*, this is the *least considerable* in Religion; because we may easily supply the Defect of *natural Fluency*, by excellent *Forms* of Prayer; the Use of which, is doubtless, far more *expedient*, than the best of our *Extempore Effusions*. For he that uses a *Form*, hath nothing else to do in Prayer, but only to *recollect* his own Thoughts, and fix them upon God; and to keep his *Mind* affected with a *due Sense* of the Divine Majesty, and his own *Need* of, and *Dependence* upon him: Whereas, he that prays *extempore*, besides all this, is concerned to *invent* proper and apt *Expressions*, lest he should be *impertinent* or *indecent* in his Addresses unto God; unless he expects that the *Spirit* should *immediately* dictate to him the Words of his Prayer; which is to suppose himself a Person immediately *inspired*, and his Prayer of *Divine Revelation*; and consequently, of equal Authority with the *Scriptures* themselves. But the best *Religious Use* that can be made of *Fluency* and *Volubility* of Speech, is in *speaking* to others of *God* and *Things Divine*; here it is useful indeed to make Man an *Orator* for *Religion*, and to enable him to recommend it more *effectually* to others.

Thus far therefore this sort of *bodily Exercise* may be *profitable*; both as it may be made *instrumental* to raise our *own Devotions*, and to propagate true Piety unto others: But beyond this, I know no place at all it hath in Religion: For there is no doubt, but we may be very *good Men* without this Gift of *Fluency*, and very *bad Men* with it; there being no Necessity of Consequence from an *honest Heart* to a *voluble Tongue*. And certainly, that which proceeds from no *higher Principle* than mere *natural Enthusiasm*; and consequently, may be easily attain'd by Persons grossly *hypocritical* and *debauched*; ought not to be looked upon as a Mark of *Godliness*. And yet alas! how many Men are there that place *all* their *Religion* in their *Tongues*; and esteem it as a certain Sign of *Grace*, that they are able to pray in *fluent Expressions*, and to talk of God in *rapturous Flights of Fancy*: For they being most commonly *strained* in their *Religious Exercises*, and not able to *vent* themselves with any *Freedom* or *Readiness*; when they fall into an extraordinary *Fit* of Fluency and Enlargement, of which they can give no natural Account, they presently conclude it to be an *immediate Gift* of God's *Spirit*, and a special Token of his *peculiar Favour* to them. And accordingly, if you peruse the late Histories of the *spiritual Experiences* of our *modern Converts*, you will find, that they contain little else but strange Relations of their *rapturous Discourses*, and *wondrous Enlargements* in Prayer: Which because they have something *extraordinary* in them are generally thought to be the immediate Effects of the *Divine Spirit*: Whereas, commonly, they proceed merely from the present *Temper* of the *Body*, and are as *mechanical* as any other Operations of *Nature*. For let a Man's Body be but put into a *fervent Temper*; his Spirits into *quick*, but *manageable Motions*; this will naturally produce in him a more *fine* and *exquisite Power* of Perception, by causing the Images of things to come *faster* into his Fancy, and to appear more *distinct* there; and then his Fancy being more *pregnant* with new *Idea's* and *Images*, than it uses to be, his Expressions must necessarily be more *fluent* and *easie*. But then, if when this *natural Fervour* of his Temper be intended with Vapours of *heated Melancholy*, his Fan-

cy be but often impressed and rubbed upon with the most vehement and moving Objects of Religion, such as *God* and *Christ*, and *Heaven* and *Hell*; it must necessarily raise in him *great* and *vehement* Passions, and dictate to him *pathetick* and *rapturous* Expressions. And this hath been commonly experimented by the *Devoto's* of all Religions: For even among the devouter *Turks* and *Heathens* we may find as notorious Instances of those *Incomes* and *Enlargements*, as in any of our *modern* Histories of Christian Experiences. Thus the *Heathen* Poets in all high Flushes of their Fancy, conceited themselves *divinely* inspired: *Est Deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo*. And the great Orator *Aristides* positively affirms himself to be *inspired* in his Orations; because sometimes he felt in himself an *extraordinary* Vein of *Fluency*, which was only excited by a brisker Agitation of his Spirits. Wherefore it is not at all to be wondered at, if, when Men are employed in Religious Exercises, the same *natural* Enthusiasm, especially when it is exalted by *Religious* Melancholy, should so wing and inspire their Fancies. For there is no Man whatsoever, that is but *religiously* inclined, and of a *soft* and *impressive* Temper, but by *familiarizing* his Fancy to the great Objects of Religion, and setting them before his Mind in *distinct* and *affecting* Ideas, may easily chase himself into such a *Pathos*, as to be able to talk to, or of, God and Religion, in *lofty* and *rapturous* Strains of Rhetorick: Nor is it any Argument of such a Man's being *inspired*, that his Discourse doth so *move* and *affect* those that hear him; because all Language that is *soft*, *fluent* and *pathetical*, is naturally apt to make deep Impressions on the Auditors. For even the *Grecian* Sophists, as *Plutarch* tells us, by their *singing* Tones, and *honeyed* Words, and *effeminate* Phrases and Accents, did very often transport their Auditors into a kind of *Bacchical* Enthusiasm: And, no doubt, but the Hearers of whom he speaks, who were wont to applaud their Orators at the End of their Declamations with a *ῥαυδὸς, θαυμάσιος, ἀπερίγραπτος*, *divinely*, *heavenly*, *preciously*, *unimitably* spoken, found themselves as much *moved*, as many a Man doth at a Sermon; who yet thinks it is not the *Art* of the Preacher, but the *Spirit* of God speaking in, and by him, that warms and excites them. Wherefore, as we would not deceive and undo our own Souls, let us have a great care that we do not place our Religion in any such *Enthusiastick* Fervours of *Spirit*, and Overflowings of *Fancy*: For though this may be a *helpful* Instrument to us in our Religious Exercises, yet it is not by this that we are to estimate the *Goodness* of them; but by those Laws and Circumstances which do *moralize* Human Actions, and render them *reasonable*, and *holy*, and *good*. For 'tis not in loud Noises, or melting Expressions, that the *divine* Spirit is discovered; but in a *divine* Nature and *Godlike* Disposition: And the Effects of true Religion are not to be look'd for in Words and Talk, but in Life and Action; and therefore St. Paul tells the *Corinthians*, some of whom, it seems, had too great an Opinion of his Way of Religious Rhetorication, that he would come among them and know, *not the Speech of them that were puffed up, but the Power*; For the Kingdom of God, saith he, *consisteth not in Word, but in Power*, 1 Cor. 4. 19, 20.

Fifthly, Another sort of *bodily* Exercise that is of *some*, though but *little* Account in Religion, is *outward* and *bodily* Worship. There is no doubt, but we ought, when we are worshipping God, to signify the *profound* Sense that we have of his Majesty and Greatness, by *outward* Adorations, and an *humble* and *lowly* Demeanour. For though we may signify to God the *Honour* and *Worship* that we owe to him, by *internal* Acts of our Mind, by our *Love*, and *Fear*, and *Hope*, and *Admiration*; because he sees our *Hearts* and discerns the most *secret* Motions of our Souls: Yet since to him we owe the Members of our Bodies, as well as the Faculties of our Minds, it is very reasonable that we should worship him with both, that both our Bodies and Minds should offer the Tribute of Homage which they owe to the *Fountain* of their Beings; that so having *each* of them a share in the Bounties of God, they may be *Co-partners* too in the Returns of *Gratitude* to him. And though the *internal* Acts of our Minds do sufficiently signify unto God our *Esteem* and *Veneration* of Him; yet it is highly reasonable,

to fix himself upon God with all the *united Vigour* of his Mind, which not being disturb'd with the *Difficulty* of expressing its Desires, will be the more at leisure to *intend* them, that so its Devotions may flow *secundo flumine*, in a more easie and undisturb'd Current: Besides which, I say, we all find by Experience, that *proper* and *fluent* Expressions are in their own Nature apt to *warm* and *heighten* our Affections; which nothing hath a greater Influence in, than the Charms of *pathetical Oratory*.

To be able therefore to word our *Prayers* in *proper* and *ready* Expressions, is of considerable *Advantage* to our *Devotions*; our *Words* being so apt to affect our *Minds*, and our *Passions* to keep time with the Musick of our own *Language*: And whilst we wear these *Bodies* about us, and our *Souls* are clogged and depressed with *fleshly Desires*, we have need enough to use all Arts and Advantages of *spiriting* and *enlivening* our Devotions. But yet, I confess, of all these *bodily Exercises*, this is the *least considerable* in Religion; because we may easily supply the Defect of *natural Fluency*, by excellent *Forms* of Prayer; the Use of which, is doubtless, far more *expedient*, than the best of our *Extempore Effusions*. For he that uses a *Form*, hath nothing else to do in Prayer, but only to *recollect* his own Thoughts, and fix them upon God; and to keep his *Mind* affected with a *due Sense* of the Divine Majesty, and his own *Need* of, and *Dependence* upon him: Whereas, he that prays *extempore*, besides all this, is concerned to *invent* proper and apt *Expressions*, lest he should be *impertinent* or *indecent* in his Addresses unto God; unless he expects that the *Spirit* should *immediately* dictate to him the Words of his Prayer; which is to suppose himself a Person immediately *inspired*, and his Prayer of *Divine Revelation*; and consequently, of equal Authority with the *Scriptures* themselves. But the best *Religious Use* that can be made of *Fluency* and *Volubility* of Speech, is in *speaking* to others of *God* and *Things Divine*; here it is useful indeed to make Man an *Orator* for *Religion*, and to enable him to recommend it more *effectually* to others.

Thus far therefore this sort of *bodily Exercise* may be *profitable*; both as it may be made *instrumental* to raise our own Devotions, and to propagate true Piety unto others: But beyond this, I know no place at all it hath in Religion: For there is no doubt, but we may be very good Men without this Gift of *Fluency*, and very bad Men with it; there being no Necessity of Consequence from an *honest Heart* to a *voluble Tongue*. And certainly, that which proceeds from no *higher Principle* than mere *natural Enthusiasm*; and consequently, may be easily attain'd by Persons grossly *hypocritical* and *debauched*; ought not to be looked upon as a Mark of *Godliness*. And yet alas! how many Men are there that place *all* their Religion in their *Tongues*; and esteem it as a certain Sign of *Grace*, that they are able to pray in *fluent Expressions*, and to talk of God in *rapturous Flights of Fancy*: For they being most commonly *strained* in their *Religious Exercises*, and not able to *vent* themselves with any *Freedom* or *Readiness*; when they fall into an extraordinary *Fit* of *Fluency* and *Enlargement*, of which they can give no natural Account, they presently conclude it to be an *immediate Gift* of God's *Spirit*, and a special Token of his *peculiar Favour* to them. And accordingly, if you peruse the late Histories of the *spiritual Experiences* of our *modern Converts*, you will find, that they contain little else but strange Relations of their *rapturous Discourses*, and *wondrous Enlargements* in Prayer: Which because they have something *extraordinary* in them are generally thought to be the immediate Effects of the *Divine Spirit*: Whereas, commonly, they proceed merely from the present *Temper* of the *Body*, and are as *mechanical* as any other Operations of *Nature*. For let a Man's Body be but put into a *fervent Temper*; his Spirits into *quick*, but *manageable Motions*; this will naturally produce in him a more *fine* and *exquisite Power* of Perception, by causing the Images of things to come *faster* into his *Fancy*, and to appear more *distinct* there; and then his *Fancy* being more *pregnant* with new *Idea's* and *Images*, than it uses to be, his Expressions must necessarily be more *fluent* and *easie*. But then, if when this *natural Fervour* of his Temper be intended with Vapours of *beated Melancholy*, his *Fancy*

cy be but often impressed and rubbed upon with the most vehement and moving Objects of Religion, such as *God and Christ, and Heaven and Hell*; it must necessarily raise in him *great and vehement Passions*, and dictate to him *pathetick and rapturous Expressions*. And this hath been commonly experimented by the *Devoto's* of all Religions: For even among the devouter *Turks and Heathens* we may find as notorious Instances of those *Incomes and Enlargements*, as in any of our *modern Histories of Christian Experiences*. Thus the *Heathen Poets* in all high Flushes of their Fancy, conceited themselves *divinely inspired*: *Eft Deus in nobis, agitante calefcimus illo*. And the great Orator *Aristides* positively affirms himself to be *inspired* in his Orations; because sometimes he felt in himself an *extraordinary Vein of Fluency*, which was only excited by a brisker Agitation of his Spirits. Wherefore it is not at all to be wondered at, if, when Men are employed in Religious Exercises, the same *natural Enthusiasm*, especially when it is exalted by *Religious Melancholy*, should so wing and inspire their Fancies. For there is no Man whatsoever, that is but *religiously inclined*, and of a *soft and impressive Temper*, but by *familiarizing* his Fancy to the great Objects of Religion, and setting them before his Mind in *distinct and affecting Ideas*, may easily chase himself into such a *Pathos*, as to be able to talk to, or of, God and Religion, in *lofty and rapturous Strains of Rhetorick*: Nor is it any Argument of such a Man's being *inspired*, that his Discourse doth so *move and affect* those that hear him; because all Language that is *soft, fluent and pathetical*, is naturally apt to make deep Impressions on the Auditors. For even the *Grecian Sophists*, as *Plutarch* tells us, by their *singing Tones*, and *honied Words*, and *effeminate Phrases and Accents*, did very often transport their Auditors into a kind of *Bacchical Enthusiasm*: And, no doubt, but the Hearers of whom he speaks, who were wont to applaud their Orators at the End of their Declamations with a *Σείως, Θεοφροσύνης, δαμνύων, ἀπεργιών*, *divinely, heavenly, precious, unimitably* spoken, found themselves as much *moved*, as many a Man doth at a Sermon; who yet thinks it is not the *Art* of the Preacher, but the *Spirit* of God speaking in, and by him, that warms and excites them. Wherefore, as we would not deceive and undo our own Souls, let us have a great care that we do not place our Religion in any such *Enthusiastick Fervours of Spirit*, and *Overflowings of Fancy*: For though this may be a *helpful Instrument* to us in our Religious Exercises, yet it is not by this that we are to estimate the *Goodness* of them; but by those *Laws and Circumstances* which do *moralize Human Actions*, and render them *reasonable, and holy, and good*. For 'tis not in loud *Noises*, or melting *Expressions*, that the *divine Spirit* is discovered; but in a *divine Nature and Godlike Disposition*: And the Effects of true Religion are not to be look'd for in *Words and Talk*, but in *Life and Action*; and therefore *St. Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, some of whom, it seems, had too great an Opinion of his Way of Religious *Rhetorick*, that he would come among them and know, *not the Speech of them that were puffed up, but the Power*; *For the Kingdom of God, saith he, consisteth not in Word, but in Power*, 1 Cor. 4. 19, 20.

Fifthly, Another sort of *bodily Exercise* that is of *some*, though but *little Account* in Religion, is *outward and bodily Worship*. There is no doubt, but we ought, when we are worshipping God, to signify the *profound Sence* that we have of his Majesty and Greatness, by *outward Adorations*, and an *humble and lowly Demeanour*. For though we may signify to God the *Honour and Worship* that we owe to him, by *internal Acts of our Mind*, by our *Love, and Fear, and Hope, and Admiration*; because he sees our *Hearts* and discerns the most *secret Motions* of our Souls: Yet since to him we owe the Members of our *Bodies*, as well as the *Faculties of our Minds*, it is very reasonable that we should worship him with both, that both our *Bodies and Minds* should offer the *Tribute of Homage* which they owe to the *Fountain* of their Beings; that so having *each* of them a share in the Bounties of God, they may be *Co-partners* too in the Returns of *Gratitude* to him. And though the *internal Acts* of our *Minds* do sufficiently signify unto God our *Esteem and Veneration* of Him; yet it is highly reasonable,

especially in our *publick* Addresses to him, that we should signifie it to *Men* also; that *they* may be excited by our *Example* to glorifie God, and to acknowledge and adore the infinite Perfections of his Nature. And we have no other way to signifie to *Men* our Veneration of God, but only by *corporeal* Actions; that is, by such *Actions* or *Gestures* of the Body, as either by *Nature*, or by *Custom*, are significant of our *inward* Esteem and Adoration of him. And this, without doubt, is a Part of *Natural Religion*; forasmuch as there never was any People of any *Religion* whatsoever, but what have always expressed their Veneration of the *Divinities* whom they owned, by such *external* Reverences as were customary amongst them. And accordingly, we are enjoined in Scripture to offer up unto God the Homage of our *Bodies*, as well as of our Souls; *to worship, and bow down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker*, Psal. 95. 6. and *to glorifie him with our Souls and Bodies, which are his*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. And when the Devil solicited our Saviour with the Promise of all the Kingdoms of the World, to bow down and worship him; that is, to render him *external* Homage and Reverence, our Saviour rejects the Motion with an *It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, Matth. 4. 10. Which Words must be understood of *external*, as well as *internal* Worship; otherwise his Answer is no wise pertinent to the Devil's Proposals, which extended only to *external* Worship and Adoration.

And as *bodily* Worship is enjoined by *express Precept*, so it is warranted by the concurrent *Examples* of all holy Men; for in the *Old Testament* you have almost as many *Examples* of it, as there are Instances of *devout* and *Religious* Persons: And so observant were the *Jews* of all *external* Reverence in their *Religious* Exercises, that *to fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker*, seems to have been *Proverbial* of their Prayers and Publick Worship. And lest any Man should imagine these *bodily* Reverences to have been Part of that *Ceremonial* Worship that was *abolish'd* by the Gospel, there are sufficient *Examples* of it recorded in the *New Testament*, both to excite and warrant our *Imitation*. For even the blessed *Jesus* himself, who thought *it no Robbery to be equal with God*; yet being in the *Form of a Servant*, he thought it no Scorn to *kneel and prostrate* himself before him: For thus when he was in his last Agony, it is said, that *he fell on his Face, and prayed*, Matth. 26. 39. which in those Eastern Countries was a Signification of the *profoundest* Reverence: And afterwards, when having awoke his Disciples, he returned to his Prayer again, *St. Luke* tells us, that *he fell upon his Knees and prayed*, Luke 22. 41. Thus of *St. Stephen*, when he was breathing out his Soul in that hearty Prayer for his Enemies, it is said, that *he kneeled down, and cried with a loud Voice, Lord, lay not this Sin to their Charge*, Acts 7. 60. So also *St. Peter*, when he came to raise *Tabitha* from the dead, is said to *kneel down and pray*, Acts 9. 40. And *St. Paul* acquainting the *Ephesians* how earnestly he prayed for them, thus expresses himself; *for this Cause I bow my Knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Ephes. 3. 14. And when he was going to *Rome*, and had taken his last Farewel of the Brethren at *Miletum*, it is said, that *he kneeled down, and prayed with them*, Acts 20. 36. And how loudly soever some of our *new-fashioned* Christians may explode *external* Reverence under a Pretence of worshipping God in a more *spiritual* Manner; it is certain, that there never was any thing, even *externally*, more devout and solemn, than the Religious Assemblies of the *Primitive* Christians: For generally, at the Reading of their *publick Liturgies*, the whole Congregation *kneeled* down upon the bare Floor with their *Heads* uncovered, their *Eyes* lift up to Heaven, and their *Hands* stretch'd forth in the fashion of a Cross; and then the whole Congregation being composed into a deep Silence, the Minister began the publick Service in a most *serious* and *humble* manner; not throwing about his Prayers at random with a *clamorous, wild, and confused* Voice; but pronouncing them with a most decorous *Calmness* and *Modesty*; the People in the mean time demeaning themselves to *solemnly* and *uniformly*, that you would have thought the whole Assembly to have been animated with *one Soul*, and that Soul to have been nothing else but a *vital Sence* of

of the adorable Majesty and supereminent Perfections of God. So heavenly wide was the *Primitive* Pattern from the Rudeness and Irreverence of our *modern* Devotions, that I doubt not, should these blessed Martyrs and Confessors of our *holy Religion* arise from their Graves, and come into our *publick Assemblies*, they would suspect that we met together rather to be *worshipped* by God, than to *worship* him; our usual Postures being much fitter for *Judges*, than for *Supplicants*; and such as rather bespeak us to be receiving Petitions *from* God, than offering up Prayers *to* him. For what *Sign* do we give that we come to worship, the *great Majesty* above, when we rudely squat upon our Seats with our Hats half on, as if we thought it too great a Condescension to *uncover* our Heads, and *kneel* before the *Lord our Maker*; and that we made not bold enough with him, unless we treated him as our *Fellow*, and it were a piece of holy Familiarity to be *fancy* in our Language, and *irreverent* in our Addresses to him?

But by what hath been said, I think it is apparent, that *bodily* Worship is of so much *Account* and *Necessity* in Religion, that to neglect it, is a Piece of great *Injustice* to God, and an high *Affront* to his Majesty, whereunto we owe the *lowliest* Homage and Adoration. But after all, it must be acknowledged, that unless our *bodily* Worship be attended with an *inward lively* Sence of God, with great and worthy *Thoughts* of him, and suitable *Affections* towards him, it is all but a perfect *Pageantry*; which, tho' it makes a goodly *Shew*, hath nothing of *Substance* or *Reality* in it: Nay, if by those *external* Reverences we render him, we do not express the *inward* Veneration of our Souls; while we pretend to *worship* him, we *mock* him to his Face; and by offering him a *Shell* which hath no *Kernel* in it, we only seek to put a Trick upon him, to make him believe we *honour* and *adore* him, when in reality we do but more demurely *flout* him, and with our *Mock-Obeysances*, affront him with greater Ceremony: If therefore we do not bow our *Hearts* before him as well as our *Knees*, in our most solemn Addresses to him, we are but so many liveless *Images* of Prayer, that, like our Grandfathers Statues on their Tombs, have our Hands and Eyes lift up to Heaven, but no *Soul* to animate our Devotions. But God expects that those that worship Him, should approach him with *pure* and *humble* Minds, with their Wills inspired with *divine* Affections, and their Souls touched with an *over-awing* Sence of his Majesty; without which he accounts all our *bodily* Adoration to be nothing but *demure* Scorns, and *complemental* Mockeries; and therefore upon this very Account God denounced most fearful Judgments against *Israel*, because *they draw near him with their Mouths, and with their Lips did honour him, when their Hearts were removed far from him*, Isa. 29. 13.

Sixthly, and *Lastly*, Another sort of *bodily* Exercise that is of *some*, tho' but *little* Account in Religion, is a mere outward *Form* or *Round* of Religious Duties; such as *saying* of our Prayers, *bearing* the Word of God, and *receiving* of Sacraments, and the like; which are all of them expressly enjoined by the Christian Religion, as the *Means* by which we are to purge our Minds from all *Impurity* and *Wickedness*, and to acquire those *divine Habits* of Piety and Vertue, which are necessary to qualify us for *eternal Life*: And without all doubt, such *Means* they are, as, if *rightly* used, will by the Blessing of God, and their own natural Efficacy, exceedingly *conduce* to those great and worthy *Ends* for which they were ordained. For what *Means* can be more conducive to our Reformation and Amendment, than *constant* and *diligent* Prayer? For besides, hereby we *move* God to enable us to do our Duty by his own *Grace* and *Assistance*; by these our solemn Addresses to him, we take an effectual Course to *abstract* our Minds from *carnal* and *sensitive* Things; to *excite* and *raise* our Affections towards God, and inspire our Souls with an awful Sence of his Majesty; which are the most *rational* Antidotes we can take against the venomous Temptations of *Sin*. How necessary is it to make us thoroughly good, that we should seriously and diligently attend upon the *Preaching* and *publick Ministers* of God's Word; the great *End* of which is to state and describe the *Bounds* of Christian Duty, and to explain and enforce those mighty Motives which Christi-

anity urges to oblige us to it? Both which are indispensably *necessary* to our Reformation; because a Man cannot be good, unless he knows his Duty; and when he *knows* it, he will not be good, unless he be persuaded to it. What can be more conducive to our *Growth* and *Progress* in all Christian Grace and Vertue, than frequent *Receiving* of the Holy Sacrament? Which, besides, as it is a Channel and Conveyance of the Divine Grace and Assistance to all *worthy* Communicants, doth *sensibly* represent to us one of the mightiest Arguments to Obedience in all the Christian Religion, *viz.* the *Death* and *Sacrifice* of our Blessed Redeemer. For here we see his Bloody Tragedy acted before our Eyes; the breaking of his *Body*, and the pouring out of his *Blood* for us, being visibly represented to us; which dismal Spectacle (if we have any Remains of Ingenuity in us) cannot but affect us both with Love to Him who suffered so deeply for us, and with Horror against our Sins, which brought those Sufferings upon Him: And being thus affected, how can we forbear vowing Revenge upon our Sins, and perpetual Obedience to our most loving Redeemer, which is one of the great Ends of this *sacred* Festival? So that these *outward* Duties are not only necessary, as they are enjoyn'd by our Religion; but also as they are effectual *Means* and *Instruments* of that internal Piety and Vertue, which our Religion doth *principally* require and design: And therefore doubtless, it cannot but be a great Sin for any Christian to live in the ordinary Neglect of these *instrumental* Duties; because in so doing, he doth not only *affront* the Authority of that holy Religion to which he hath vowed Submission and Obedience; but also rejects the *Means* of his own *Recovery* and *Reformation*; and so doth openly declare himself a *reckless* *profligate* Creature, one that neither is good, nor ever *intends* to be so.

But yet, after all, it must be acknowledg'd, that he that *only* prays, and hears, and places *all* his Religion in a perpetual *Round* of these outward Performances, hath nothing of the Life and Spirit of *true* Religion in him: For, as I have already observ'd to you, these Duties are intended only for *Means* and *Instruments* of that Internal Purity of Mind, and those Divine and Godlike Dispositions of Soul, wherein the *Life* and *Substance* of Religion doth consist. Now you know, it is not barely the using of *Means* that either *is* or *doth* Good; but the using them to some good End or Purpose: As for Instance, *Books* are Means and Instruments of *Learning*; but it is not barely the using of Books or turning over the Leaves of 'em, that will make Men *wise* or *learned*; but the using them so, as to understand the Contents of 'em, and acquaint themselves with the *Things* and *Notions* contained in them. Thus *Prayer*, and *Hearing* the Word of God, and *Receiving* of Sacraments, are doubtless, excellent Means to make Men good and vertuous; but barely to use them, without any farther Intention, is to do a thing that signifies nothing; that neither is good in it self, nor will do any Good to us: If we would use them to any purpose, we must use them to the *End* they are designed for, or else we had as good not use them at all. For we may as soon become good *Scholars*, barely by turning over the *Leaves* of Learned Books, as we shall good *Christians*, barely by *praying*, and *hearing*, and *receiving*. If we do not *pray*, to the end we may be more humble and heavenly-minded; if we do not *hear*, and *receive* Sacraments, to the end we may be more just, and charitable, and meek, and temperate; we take a great deal of pains to no purpose. For tho' a Hammer and a File are excellent Tools to make a Watch or a Clock, or any such curious Machin; yet doubtless, you would account that Man extremely impertinent, that should reckon himself a skilful Mechanick, merely because he knocks and files with them. And by the same Rule, tho' *Prayers* and *Sacraments* are excellent Instruments of Christian Piety and Vertue; yet it is a ridiculous Vanity, for a Man to esteem himself a good Christian, merely because he *prays* and *communicates*; because as the Art of the Mechanick consists not barely in using his Tools, but in using them, so as to perfect and accomplish his Work with them; so the Vertue of a Christian consists not *barely* in Praying, Hearing and Receiving; but in using these Duties with that Religious Art and Skill, as is necessary to render them effectually subservient to the Ends of Piety and Vertue; And unless we use them to these Ends, we were as good not use them

them at all, for any Benefit we are like to reap from them. For what doth it signifie, for a Man to *confess* his Sins to God, if he only go round in a Circle of Confessing and Sinning, and Sinning and Confessing again? Is it any Pleasure to the Almighty, do we think, to hear us read over with Tragical Looks and Woful Tones, the odious Catalogue of our uncancell'd Guilts? Is he so fond of Affronts and Injuries we do him, as to take Delight in hearing them recounted? No, doubtless, it is impossible. 'Tis true, he hath commanded us to *confess* our Sins to him; but why hath he done so? Why, that our Confession might be instrumental to our Reformation; that it might affect us with Shame and Sorrow for our Sins, and Horror and Indignation against them: And if this be not the Effect of it, we do but blazon our Shame, when we confess our Sins, and prefer a Bill of Indictment against our selves. To what purpose do we *daily* offer up our Prayers unto God, if we do not endeavour by our *Lives* to please him? Can we imagine him so easie a Sovereign, as to be sooth'd and flatter'd with the *humble* Petitions and Intreaties of open and avowed *Rebels*? Certainly, if we do, we are infinitely mistaken. He bids us *pray* to him indeed; but why? Why, that by our constant Addresses to him, we might be *always* affected with so deep a Sense of his Sovereignty over us, and our own Dependence upon him, as might keep us continually in *Awe* of him: And if this be not the Effect of our Prayers, we only talk to the Air, and spend our Breath to no purpose. To what End do we praise God, and make Rhetorical *Acknowledgments* of his *Glory* and *Goodness*, if we do not imitate him in those Perfections, for which we admire and laud him? Do we think, so *wise*, so *great* a Being can ever be pleased and tickled to hear himself *extolled* and *commended* by a little of that fading Breath which *himself* gave Being to? Alas, no; he needs not our *poor Praises* to emblazon and magnifie him, being infinitely glorious in his own Perfections, and a sufficient Stage and Theatre to Himself. 'Tis true, he bids us praise him; but why? Why, that he might provoke us to imitate what we do commend; and to transcribe into our own selves those adorable Perfections which we laud and admire in Him: And if this be not the Effect of our praising him, all the Good we say of him, is nothing but Flattery and Complement. To what purpose do we come to Church to *hear* Sermons, and pious Exhortations, if we do not *live* them too? Do we think to please God, by meeting together to gratifie our *Ears* or *Curiosity* with some new Notions, or quaint Piece of Oratory? If we do, we are much mistaken. He hath commanded us indeed, diligently to attend the publick *Preaching* and *Ministers* of Religion: And why hath he done so, but only that we might learn his Will, and be instructed in the Motives to Obedience? And if this be not the Effect of our *Hearing*, we had as good spend our time in hearing the Whistling of the Wind, or the Roaring of the Sea. In a Word, to what End do we receive the Holy *Sacrament*, if we do not improve in Vertue by it? Do you think to please an *All-wise* God, by eating a little *Bread*, and drinking a little *Wine*, in a devout and humble Posture? Is it likely, that so *wise* a Being should be taken with such an insignificant Trifle? 'Tis true, He hath instituted this Holy Solemnity for a Perpetual Memory of our Saviour's Passion: But is this all, do you think? Has he commanded us to meet, and eat, and drink together, only to *remember*, that a great while ago the Blessed *Jesus* was crucified at *Jerusalem*? No, doubtless; that which he Ultimately designed by this solemn Memorial, was to inflame our *Love*, to confirm our *Faith*, and strengthen our Resolutions of *Obedience*; and if this be not the Effect of it, our receiving the Sacrament is of no more Account in Religion, than if we should eat and drink only to satisfy our *Hunger* and *Thirst*.

This I have the longer insisted upon, because it is so ordinary for Men to place *all* their Religion in those Instrumental *Duties*; and to believe themselves highly in Favour with God, merely because they *pray* very often, and hear a great many Sermons, and are constant Communicants at the *Lord's Table*; when, God knows, all this is only the Religion of the *Means*, and is good only as it tends farther to produce in us a Divine Temper of Mind; and to make us *sober*, and *righteous*, and *godly* in this present World: Which, if it doth not effect, it doth nothing

at all, but is altogether *vain* and *insignificant*. Wherefore, as you would not deceive and ruine your own Souls, beware of mistaking the *Means* of Godliness for *Godliness* it self; and of taking up your *Rest* there, where you should only *bait*, in order to a farther Progress; lest falling short of your *Duty*, you fall short of the *Reward* of it, and in the End receive your Portion with Hypocrites in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone.

2. Having shewed what that *bodily* Exercise is, which profits *something* in Religion, tho', compared with Godliness it self, but *very little*; I now proceed to the second Thing proposed, which was to shew you in what Respects it is, that this *bodily* Exercise doth profit but *little*. In general, it profits but *little* in respect of those Great and Noble Ends which Religion doth most principally aim at: For there are four *great* Advantages which Religion doth principally design and intend us.

1. To *reconcile* us unto God:
2. To *perfect* our Natures:
3. To *intitle* us to Heaven:
4. To *qualifie* us for Heaven:

And to each of these, these kinds of *bodily* Exercise are no farther *profitable*, than as they conduce to a *holy* Life, and *internal* Purity and Goodness; which is that alone by which these *great* Advantages are to be obtained: So that tho' they profit *something*, yea, *very much*, as they are the *Means* of Godliness, yet compar'd with Godliness *it self*, they profit but *very little*; because these are only *instrumental* to make us godly; but it is *Godliness alone* that *reconciles* us unto God, and *perfects* our Natures, and *qualifies* us for Heaven. In these four Respects therefore these kinds of *bodily* Exercise do, in comparison with Godliness, profit but *very little*.

1. As to the *reconciling* us to God. 'Tis true, this *bodily* Religion is *instrumental* to reconcile us unto God, so far as it tends to *purifie* our Minds, and to *inspire* us with a divine and Godlike Nature; but farther than this, it hath no Influence at all upon it: For there is nothing can *reconcile* God to us, or us to God, but only a *mutual Likeness* and *Agreement*. While we continue in our *Sins*, we cannot love God, *our* Nature being repugnant to *His*, who is infinitely *holy*, and *pure*, and *good*; nor can *He* love us, *His* Nature being repugnant to *ours*, which is *vile*, and *wicked*, and *unreasonable*. And how can two *Natures* be reconciled, which have such mutual *Antipathies* to each other? How can we *love* him whilst we are so prevalently *averse* to all that is *lovely* and *amiable* in Him, and so unreasonably *fond* of every thing that *He hates* and *abhors*? Doubtless, while there is such a *Contrariety* between God and us, it is impossible we should *love* him, without *hating* our selves. Hence the Apostle tells us, that the *carnal Mind* is not only an *Enemy*; but that it is *Enmity it self* to God, Rom. 8. 7. It is *Spight* and *Rancor* in the *Abstract*; being as repugnant to *His pure* and *holy* Nature, as *Heaven* is to *Hell*, or *Light* to *Darkness*. And the same Apostle gives us an Account of this *Enmity*, and shews us from whence it doth arise, Col. 1. 21. *And you that were sometime alieniated, and Enemies in your Minds by wicked Works*: These are the *Make-bates* that infuse into our Souls a secret *Enmity* to God, by inspiring them with such *Dispositions* as are altogether repugnant to the *Purity* and *Holiness* of his Nature; and there is nothing will *extinguish* these wicked *Dispositions*, from whence our *Enmity* to God doth arise, but only the *contrary* Habits of *Vertue* and true *Goodness*. So that all our *bodily* Exercises in Religion do no otherwise tend to *reconcile* our Minds to God, than as they are *instrumental* to destroy the *Body of Sin* in us, and to beget in us the *Divine* and *Godlike* Nature; which if they do not effect, they will leave us at as great a distance from God, as ever they found us; and after all our *Professions*, and *bodily* Severities, our *rapturous* Passions in Religion, and *fluent* Strains of *Devotion*; after our *Hearing*, and *Praying*, and *Receiving* of Sacraments, we shall be found as utter *Enemies* to God, as ever we were

were before : For there is nothing can *reconcile* the Mind of a Man to God, but only a *thorough Conformity* and *Agreement* in Nature with him. And as we cannot be *reconciled* to God, without being *Godly* ; so neither can God be *reconciled* to us 'Tis true, he bears a hearty *Good-will* to all his Creation, and earnestly *desires* the Welfare of every Being that he hath made capable of any Degree of *Happiness* ; and there is no Man whatsoever excluded from this his *universal Benevolence*, which with out-stretched Arms embraces the *whole* Creation : But it is impossible he should *love* any, so as to be *pleased* with, or *delighted* in them, but only those that are *good* : For tho' his Love be terminated upon *infinite* Objects ; yet it is founded upon *unchangeable* Reason, and that is *true Goodness*, which is the *only* Motive of *wise* and *reasonable* Love. Thus he loves Himself, not purely because he is Himself : For that would be rather an *Instinct*, than a *reasonable* Love ; but because he is good : And he loves Himself above all other Things, not out of a blind *unreasonable* Fondness to himself, but because he knows Himself to be the *highest* and *most perfect* Good. And if upon an impossible *Supposition*, he were less *good* than he is, he would doubtless, love himself less than he doth ; but because his *own Essence* is the *fairest* Copy, and *most perfect* Idea of Goodness ; therefore if he love *reasonably*, he must love himself *most* ; and consequently, love all other things *proportionably* as they *approach* and *resemble* Himself in *Goodness*, and *Purity*, and *Holiness*. For if he love himself *best*, because he is *most good*, he must necessarily love all other things *proportionably*, as they are more or less good : And indeed he could not love Himself *infinitely*, should he love *us* for any *other* Reason, but that for which he loves Himself : For he can love himself no farther than he hath Reason for it ; and therefore, if he had *other* Reasons to love *us*, beyond what he hath to love Himself, he would not love Himself *infinitely* ; because he would not have *infinite Reason* for it. So that it is plain, God loves *Himself* and *us* for the *same* general Reason. And as he doth not love *Himself*, but because he is *good* ; so he doth not love *us*, merely because we are such and such Men, out of a peculiar *Fondness* to our individual Persons, but because we *resemble* Him in that *Goodness* and *Purity* for which he loves Himself. For one of these three things we must say, That either God loves *us* for *no Reason* at all, which would be a degrading of his *most wise* Love, into a *foolish* Fondness ; or else, that he loves *us* for our *Sins* ; which would be to make him love *different* Objects, *Himself* and *us*, upon *contrary* Reasons ; or, that he loves *us* for our *Goodness*, and *Conformity* to his own *most pure* and *perfect* Nature. This therefore is that *alone*, that will *reconcile* God to *us*, and without this all our *bodily* Religion is *insignificant*. Tho' we should profess Religion with the *Constancy* of *Martyrs*, and our whole Lives were a continued *Rapture* of Religious *Passions* ; tho' we should *fast* our selves into *Skeletons*, and pray till our Knees clave to the Ground ; tho' we should live upon *Sacraments*, and hear as many *Sermons* as there are Hours in the Day ; yet if upon *all this* we do not grow more *charitable* and *benevolent*, more *honest* and *temperate*, more *humble* and *heavenly-minded*, it will be all to no *purpose* ; for when all is done, there is nothing but *true Goodness* can *indear* us to the *good God*. So that it is apparent, that notwithstanding all our *bodily* Exercises, so long as we continue in our *Sins*, there is so vast a *Gulf* between God and *us*, that neither we can go to *Him*, nor he come to *us* ; and unless God alters *his Nature*, by becoming *impure*, as we are *impure* ; or we alter *ours*, by becoming *pure*, as *He* is *pure*, so *immense* is the Distance between him and *us*, that it is impossible we should ever *meet* and *agree*. What the Prophet therefore says of Sacrifice, may be said of all *bodily* Religion, *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, or ten thousand Rivers of Oil ? Will he be reconciled with zealous Professions, fluent Prayers or melting Passions ? No, no ; He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do Justice, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God, Micah 6. 7, 8.*

2. *Bodily Exercise* profits but little in comparison with *Godliness*, as to the *perfecting* of our Natures. 'Tis true, this *bodily Exercise* is *instrumental* of our *Perfection*, so far as it promotes in *us* the Vertues of *Godliness* and *Religion* ; if
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it makes us *meek*, and *humble*, and *just*, and *charitable*, and *temperate*; if it inspires us with a *sincere* Love to God, and a dutiful Awe and Dread of his Majesty; if it produces in us a hearty *Submission* to his Will, and a constant Dependence upon his Truth and Goodness; then indeed, it doth *effectually* conduce to the *Perfection* and *Accomplishment* of our Natures, it being productive of that wherein the *Perfection* of our Natures doth consist: But if these are not the Effects of it, we are never the better for it; and after all our *Hearing*, and *Praying*, and *Professing*, our Nature will be still as *maim'd* and *imperfect* as ever it was before. For the *Perfection* of a Rational Nature consists not in *Forms* and *Outsides*, and such and such *bodily* Motions, and *mechanical* Exercises of our Sense and Passion; but in being *wise* and *good*; in having our *Understandings* informed with the Principles of right Reason, and our *Wills* and *Affections* regulated by them. For to be a *perfect* Man, is to live up to the *highest* Principle of Human Nature, and that is *Reason*; which is the proper Character of our Beings that *distinguishes* us from all *sublunary* Natures, and sets us in a *Form* of Being above them. When therefore we are released from the Slavery of *Sense* and *Passion*, and all our Powers are perfectly subdued to this *superior* Principle, as to do every thing that it *commands*, and nothing that it *forbids*; and we choose, and refuse, and love, and hate, and hope, and fear, and desire, and delight according as *right Reason* directs and dictates to us: Then, and not till then, we are come to the full *Stature* of *perfect* Men in *Christ Jesus*. Now what else is *Godliness*, but only an *Habit* of living according to the Laws of *Reason*, or an accustoming our selves in all our Circumstances, to do those Things that are most *fit* and *reasonable*; to demean our selves towards God, our *Selves*, and all the *World*, with the Devotion, Sobriety, and Justice, as becomes *Rational* Beings placed in our Condition and Circumstances? This is *Godliness*: And till we are in some measure arrived to *this*, our Faculties are wholly out of Joint, notwithstanding all our *bodily* Religion. For so long as we live in a State of *Sin*, we live in *Rebellion* to our own Reason, and the Natural Polity of our *Souls* is dissolved into a wild confused *Anarchy*. Our *Reason*, that was made to govern us, is enslaved by its own Vassals, and forced to truckle to our *Passions* and *Appetites*. The Law in our *Members* controuls the Law in our *Minds*, and countermands the Dictates of our *purest* Reason; and so our Nature is turned upside down, and the Cardinal Points of our Motion changed into quite contrary Positions. And so far is our Nature from being *perfected* without *Godliness*, that it is the most wretched *confused* Thing in the whole World; a mere undistinguish'd *Chaos*, where *frigida cum calidis*, Sense and Reason, Brute and Man, are shuff'd together in a Heap of rude and undigested Ruins: And being in this *sick disorderly* Condition, what can recover us, but only inuring and accustoming our selves to live *godly*; or, which is all one, according to the Prescripts of *right Reason*? This by degrees will *re-advance* our Reason to its native Throne, and *reduce* our rebellious *Passions* and *Appetites* to a *pure* and *Spiritual* Mind: This will set our disjointed Faculties in order, and restore our decayed Nature to its *primitive* Health and Vigour. For by inuring our selves to a Life of *Reason*, our Passions and Appetites will by degrees be *tam'd* and *civiliz'd*; so that at length it will be *natural* and *easie* to us; and then we shall chearfully go on from one degree of Vertue to another, till all the *Unevennesses* of our Natures are *filed off*, and our Souls are *polish'd* into living Images of the *most perfect* God; till we come to that *heavenly* permanent State of ever *knowing* and *doing* that which is *best* and *most reasonable*: And this is the utmost Pitch of *Perfection* that any reasonable Nature can aspire to. So that it is *Godliness* alone that doth perfect our Natures, and restore us to the *pure* State of *Reasonable* Beings. For to be perfectly Godly, is to be perfectly conformable to the eternal Laws of *Reason*; and he that is so, is advanced to the utmost Pitch of *Perfection*, that his reasonable Nature is capable of.

3. *Bodily* Exercise profits but *little* in comparison with *Godliness*, as to the *entitling* us to Heaven and eternal Life: For God hath been so gracious, as not only to *assure* us that there is a *Heaven* and future *Happiness*; but he hath also
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promised it to us upon certain Terms and Conditions; that by performing these, we might not only believe that there is a *Heaven*, but also be inspired with a certain *Hope* of enjoying it. For upon our performing the *Condition* upon which Heaven is *promised* to us, we are vested with such an *inalienable* Right to it, as we can never be dis-seised of; unless the God of Truth break his *Word*, which he can never do, until he ceases to be God. This therefore is one great Advantage which Religion doth design us, to beget in us such a lively *Hope* of that blessed Immortality, which it promises to us, as might carry us chearfully through the *weary* Stages of our *Duty*, and support our Minds under all the *Calamities* of this present World. And without all doubt, the *Hope* of Heaven is the *greatest* Blessing that we are capable of on this side Heaven: For if we had *all* the *World* before us, and *every* *Pleasure* of it were *distilled* to a *Quintessence*, to feast our Desires and entertain our licorice Appetites; what a *poor inconsiderable* Trifle would it be, compared with the *Hope* of being transformed into the *Likeness* of God, and dwelling for ever in his *Presence*, there to spend a blissful Eternity with *Saints* and *Angels*, *Arch-angels* and *Seraphims*, in one continued *everlasting* Act of *Love* and *Joy*? What *mean* Things are all the sickly Joys, the empty, flat, evanid Pleasures *this* World doth afford us, compared with the ravishing Pleasures and divine Contentments that spring from such *vast* and *mighty* Hopes? This *Hope* of Heaven therefore being so highly advantageous to us, God hath therefore *promised* it to us upon certain *Terms* and *Conditions*; that so we might have a *sure* Foundation to build our *Hope* upon; that we might know upon what *Grounds* we are to expect that blessed *Reward*, which we could never have done, had God left himself *free* to withhold or bestow it upon us, according to the *arbitrary*, and, to us, *uncertain* Determinations of his Will; and not bequeathed it to us upon such *Conditions* by his own *irrevocable* Promise. That therefore which gives us a Right to Heaven, and is the only *true* *Ground* of our Hopes of it, is our performing the *Condition* upon which it is promised to us; and the *Condition* upon which it is promised to us, is nothing less than *true* and *universal* Godliness. And hence the Apostle tells us, that *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. And our Saviour, in *Matth.* 5. restrains the Beatitudes of the other World to those that are *pure in Spirit*, and *pure in Heart*, that are *benign* and *merciful*. that *hunger and Thirst after Righteousness*, and that endure the unjust Persecutions of the World with Christian Patience, and Courage, and Constancy. And the Promise of eternal Life is limited by the Apostle to those *who by patient Continuance in well doing, seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality*, Rom. 2. 7. And if *Godliness* be the *sole Condition* of eternal Life, then it necessarily follows, that all our *bodily* Exercises in Religion do no farther conduce to make us *godly* and *vertuous*; which if they do not effect, they give us no more Right to Heaven, or *Ground* to hope for it, than the most *indifferent* Actions in the World. Hence our Saviour hath told us beforehand, that we may know what to trust to, *Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven*, Matth. 7. 21. that is, not every one that professes my Name, and acknowledges me for his Lord and Master, and makes solemn *Prayers* and *Addresses* to me, shall be admitted into the Kingdom of Happiness; such *outward bodily* Exercises as these will never entitle any Man unto that blessed Condition: Tho' you should *profess* my Name never so solemnly, and pray to me with never so much Fervour and Earnestness, yet do not think I will be brib'd by such Trifles to connive at your *Sins*, and admit you into Heaven notwithstanding all your *Impieties*: No, no; I do assure you beforehand, that you may know what to trust to, that there is nothing but your *sincere* Submission to the Will of my Father, shall ever persuade me to receive you into his *heavenly* Kingdom. Let us not therefore flatter our selves any longer with vain Expectances of Heaven, upon the account of our *bodily* Religion: For unless our Natures are *chang'd*, and our Minds *reformed* and *better'd* by it, we may as well lay *claim* to Heaven, because we *eat*, and *drink*, and *sleep*, as because we *pray*, and *hear*, and *receive* Sacraments: For tho' these *bodily* Exercises are profitable

Means to entitle us to Heaven ; yet it is only upon this Account, because they are *Means* to make us good : But if they do not effect *this*, they are all but so many insignificant Cyphers. He therefore that builds his Hope of Heaven merely upon *bodily* Religion, builds upon a *sandy Foundation*, which if he finally trust to, will sink under him, and bury him in eternal Ruins.

4. And Lastly, *Bodily* Exercise profits but little in comparison with *Godliness*, as to the *qualifying* us for Heaven : which is a distinct Consideration from the former. For supposing we could have a *Right* to Heaven, without being *disposed* and *qualified* for it, it would be no Advantage at all to us : For before we can enjoy Heaven, our *Minds* must be *reconciled* to the Pleasures and Delights of it ; or else it is impossible they should be Pleasures to us. Now in the Temper of every wicked Mind there is a natural Antipathy unto all those *pure* and *spiritual* Joys wherewith the *heavenly* State abounds ; which being *pure*, and *chaste*, and *refined*, can never agree with the *vitiating* Palate of a *base degenerate* Soul. For what Concord can there be between *spiteful* and *devilish* Spirits, and the Fountain of all *Love* and *Goodness* ? Between *sensual* and *carnalized* Souls, that understand no other Pleasures, but only those of the *Flesh* ; and those *pure* and *virgin* Spirits, that never eat nor drink, but live for ever upon *Wisdom* and *Holiness*, and *Love*, and *Contemplation* ? How could I be happy in seeing that God, whom I cannot love ; in *conversing* with these Spirits, whose Genius and Temper I do *abhor* ; and in being for ever employed in those heavenly *Exercises*, to which I have the greatest Aversion : No, no ; till I am of the same *Disposition* with the Celestial Inhabitants, and my *Mind* is contempered to the *Heavenly* State, it is impossible that *Heaven* and I should ever agree ; and I may as well see without Eyes, or hear without Ears, as enjoy Heaven without a *Heavenly Disposition*. For as to the main, we shall be of the same Temper or *Mind* when we come into the other World, as we are while we continue in *this*, it being unimaginable how our *Disposition* should be totally *changed* merely by passing out of one World into another : And therefore, as in *this* World it is *Likeness* that doth *congregate* and *associate* Beings together ; so doubtless, it is in the *other* too : So that if we carry thither with us our wicked devilish *Dispositions*, (as we shall doubtless do, unless we subdue and mortify them here) there will be no *Company* fit for us to *associate* with, but only the Devils, and damned Ghosts of wicked Men ; with whom our wretched Spirits being *already* joined by a *Likeness* of Nature, will be forced to congregate, as soon as ever they are excommunicated from the Society of Mortals. For whither should they flock, but to the Birds of their own Feather ? Where should they join *Society*, but with those malignant Spirits to whom they are joined already by a *Community* of *Natures* ? For supposing that when they are landed in Eternity, it were left at their own *Liberty* to go either to Heaven or to Hell ; yet Heaven would be no Place for them, the Air of that bright Empire of *eternal Day* would never agree with their *black* and *hellish* Natures : For, alas ! what should they do among those blessed Souls that inhabit it, to whose *Godlike* Natures, *Divine* Conversations, and *Heavenly* Employments, they have the greatest *Repugnancy* and *Aversion* ? From hence therefore it is apparent, that to our comfortable Possession of Heaven, it is not only necessary, we should have a *right* to it ; but also that we should be *prepar'd* and *qualified* for it : And as to this, all our *bodily* Exercises in Religion are no farther profitable, than as they are *effectual Means* of true substantial *Godliness*. For when the *Soul* goes out of this *Body*, it must leave all this *bodily* Religion behind it, and carry nothing with it into Eternity ; but only those *Divine Vertues* and *Heavenly Dispositions*, which by the Means of this *bodily* Religion it did here acquire. For our *outward* Professions, and *bodily* Severities and Passions, our *praying*, and *hearing*, and *receiving* of Sacraments, are all but Scaffolds to this *Heavenly* Building of *inward* Purity and Goodness : And when once this is finished for Eternity, then must these Scaffolds go down as Things of no farther *Use* or *Necessity*. But as for the Graces of the *Mind*, they shall stand for ever as the only *fit* Habitations of the *Heavenly* Pleasures : And therefore 'tis impossible that these our *bodily* Exercises should formally dispose our

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Souls for Heaven, since in Heaven they shall wholly *cease*. For altho' our *Love*, and *Joy*, and all our sweeter *Affections*, shall there be kept in everlasting *Exercise*, yet shall they be wholly *resn'd* from all *bodily* Passion; because there we shall be stript into *naked* and *unbodied* Spirits: Our *Love* shall unite our *Wills* to God and the whole Choir of blessed Spirits, without any *Warmth* of Spirit, or *Expansions* of Heart. Our *Joy* being purely the Jubilee of our *Minds*, and the Recreation of our *Reason*, shall flow without Shouts or Noises, in a most *sweet*, but *silent* Current; and the whole Scene of our *Happiness* shall be transacted on the Stage of our *Reason*. There being therefore no room for *bodily* Exercise in this Heavenly State, it is impossible we should be *qualified* by it for the *Enjoyment* of Heaven: But doubtless, our *Fitness* for Heaven must consist in such *inherent Qualities* of Mind as separate *Souls* may carry to Heaven with them: And what these are, may be easily concluded, by considering what the *Employment* of Heaven is; which, so far as we are given to understand of it, consists in *contemplating* and *adoring* the Divinity, and in *conversing* with those pure and blessed Spirits that dwell for ever in his Presence. Now, to make us fit for such an *Employment*, the only *necessary* Qualities of Mind are an universal *Love*, and a profound *Humility*; which two are the *fundamental* Vertues of Religion; of which all the other Vertues are so many different *Operations*. 'Tis true, our *Love* and *Humility* will not have all the *same* Operations in the *other* World, as they have in *this*; because there we shall not have the *same* Occasions for them: For being placed above all *Sufferings* in the Enjoyment of the most *perfect* Good, we shall have no occasion either for the *passive* Vertues of *Patience*, and *Meekness*, and *Forgiveness* of Injuries; nor yet for those active Vertues which speak us distant from our Happiness; such as *Faith* and *Hope*; which shall be swallow'd up in *Vision* and *Fruition*. But tho' in that blessed State we shall have no occasion to express our *Love* and *Humility* in such Acts as these; yet without these two great Vertues, we shall be no ways capable of the Heavenly Employment: For what Pleasure can we take in *contemplating* the Being of God, if we do not love Him? Doubtless, our own *Antipathy* to the *Goodness* and *Purity* of His Nature, will either avert our Eyes from beholding him, or render the Sight of him *horrible* and *dreadful* to us. And if we do not contemplate him with an humble and lowly Mind, the *Sight* of his super-eminent Perfections will either provoke our *Envy* or *Contempt*, make us *pine* to see our selves out-shone by him, or *contemn* his Glories out of an overweening Opinion of our own. Again, if we do not love God, we cannot *adore* him with a *free* and *cheerful* Mind; and if we are *proud* and *self-conceited*; instead of God, we shall adore our *Selves*, and become our own *Idols* and *Votaries*. So that without *Humility* and *Love*, we shall be no ways fit for the *other* part of that sweet Employment which consists in *conversing* with holy and blessed Spirits; for *their* Conversation being wholly regulated by the sacred Laws of *wise* and *holy* Friendship, and consisting in an everlasting Intercourse of *chaste* and *mutual* Indearments; no Soul can be capable of bearing a *Part* in it, that is not inspired with universal *Love* and great *Humility*: Both which are indispensably necessary to every *wise* and *friendly* Conversation. For where *Humility* is wanting, every Offence will kindle an unquenchable *Discord*. So that a *proud* *malicious* Nature can converse no where with Satisfaction; much less, with those blessed Souls, in whose most *pure* and *perfect* Friendship there is not the least Intermixture, either of *Flattery* or *Envy*: For being all perfectly good, and perfectly happy, they can neither over-value themselves, nor *envy* what another enjoys: So that in all their Conversation there is no Entertainment either for *Pride* or *Malice*; but on the contrary, there is nothing but what is distasteful to them: For where there are none that over-value either themselves or others, but every one loves every one with a sincere and inviolable Friendship, there can be no Conversation but what is *distasteful* to an *arrogant* and *malicious* Temper. What then should a proud malignant Spirit do among those happy Beings, a great part of whose Heaven consists in *rejoycing* in *each other's* Happiness? Doubtless, could such a Spirit be admitted into their Society, their Bliss would so *enrage* its Envy, their Perfection so *upbraid* its Baseness, that it would find nothing but Causes of *Discontent* in a Conversation so *disagreeable* to its Nature.

Means to entitle us to Heaven ; yet it is only upon this Account, because they are *Means* to make us good : But if they do not effect *this*, they are all but so many insignificant Cyphers. He therefore that builds his Hope of Heaven merely upon *bodily* Religion, builds upon a *sandy Foundation*, which if he finally trust to, will sink under him, and bury him in eternal Ruins.

4. And Lastly, *Bodily* Exercise profits but *little* in comparison with *Godliness*, as to the *qualifying* us for Heaven : which is a distinct Consideration from the former. For supposing we could have a *Right* to Heaven, without being *disposed* and *qualified* for it, it would be no Advantage at all to us : For before we can enjoy Heaven, our *Minds* must be *reconciled* to the Pleasures and Delights of it ; or else it is impossible they should be Pleasures to us. Now in the Temper of every wicked Mind there is a natural Antipathy unto all those *pure* and *spiritual* Joys wherewith the *heavenly* State abounds ; which being *pure*, and *chaste*, and *refined*, can never agree with the *vitiating* Palate of a *base degenerate* Soul. For what Concord can there be between *spiteful* and *devilish* spirits, and the Fountain of all *Love* and *Goodness* ? Between *sensual* and *carnalized* Souls, that understand no other Pleasures, but only those of the *Flesh* ; and those *pure* and *virgin* Spirits, that never eat nor drink, but live for ever upon *Wisdom* and *Holiness*, and *Love*, and *Contemplation* ? How could I be happy in seeing that God, whom I cannot love ; in *conversing* with these Spirits, whose Genius and Temper I do *abhor* ; and in being for ever employed in those heavenly *Exercises*, to which I have the greatest Aversion : No, no ; till I am of the same *Disposition* with the Celestial Inhabitants, and my *Mind* is tempered to the *Heavenly* State, it is impossible that *Heaven* and I should ever agree ; and I may as well see without Eyes, or hear without Ears, as enjoy Heaven without a *Heavenly Disposition*. For as to the main, we shall be of the same Temper or *Mind* when we come into the other World, as we are while we continue in *this*, it being unimaginable how our *Disposition* should be totally *changed* merely by passing out of one World into another : And therefore, as in *this* World it is *Likeness* that doth *congregate* and *associate* Beings together ; so doubtless, it is in the *other* too : So that if we carry thither with us our wicked devilish *Dispositions*, (as we shall doubtless do, unless we subdue and mortify them here) there will be no *Company* fit for us to *associate* with,* but only the Devils, and damned Ghosts of wicked Men ; with whom our wretched Spirits being *already* joined by a *Likeness* of Nature, will be forced to congregate, as soon as ever they are excommunicated from the Society of Mortals. For whither should they flock, but to the Birds of their own Feather ? Where should they join *Society*, but with those malignant Spirits to whom they are joined already by a *Community* of *Natures* ? For supposing that when they are landed in Eternity, it were left at their own *Liberty* to go either to Heaven or to Hell ; yet Heaven would be no Place for them, the Air of that bright Empire of *eternal Day* would never agree with their *black* and *hellish* Natures : For, alas ! what should they do among those blessed Souls that inhabit it, to whose *Godlike* Natures, *Divine* Conversations, and *Heavenly* Employments, they have the greatest *Repugnancy* and *Aversion* ? From hence therefore it is apparent, that to our comfortable Possession of Heaven, it is not only necessary, we should have a *right* to it ; but also that we should be *prepar'd* and *qualified* for it : And as to this, all our *bodily* Exercises in Religion are no farther profitable, than as they are *effectual Means* of true substantial *Godliness*. For when the *Soul* goes out of this *Body*, it must leave all this *bodily* Religion behind it, and carry nothing with it into Eternity ; but only those *Divine Virtues* and *Heavenly Dispositions*, which by the Means of this *bodily* Religion it did here acquire. For our *outward* Professions, and *bodily* Severities and Passions, our *praying*, and *hearing*, and *receiving* of Sacraments, are all but Scaffolds to this *Heavenly* Building of *inward* Purity and Goodness : And when once this is finished for Eternity, then must these Scaffolds go down as Things of no farther *Use* or *Necessity*. But as for the Graces of the *Mind*, they shall stand for ever as the only *fit* Habitations of the *Heavenly* Pleasures : And therefore 'tis impossible that these our *bodily* Exercises should formally dispose our

Soul

Souls for Heaven, since in Heaven they shall wholly *cease*. For altho' our *Love*, and *Joy*, and all our sweeter *Affections*, shall there be kept in everlasting *Exercise*, yet shall they be wholly *refn'd* from all *bodily* Passion; because there we shall be stript into *naked* and *unbodied* Spirits: Our *Love* shall unite our *Wills* to God and the whole Choir of blessed Spirits, without any *Warmth* of Spirit, or *Expansions* of Heart. Our *Joy* being purely the Jubilee of our *Minds*, and the Recreation of our *Reason*, shall flow without Shouts or Noises, in a most *sweet*, but *silent* Current; and the whole Scene of our *Happiness* shall be transacted on the Stage of our *Reason*. There being therefore no room for *bodily* Exercise in this Heavenly State, it is impossible we should be *qualified* by it for the *Enjoyment* of Heaven: But doubtless, our *Fitness* for Heaven must consist in such *inherent Qualities* of Mind as separate *Souls* may carry to Heaven with them: And what these are, may be easily concluded, by considering what the *Employment* of Heaven is; which, so far as we are given to understand of it, consists in *contemplating* and *adoring* the Divinity, and in *conversing* with those pure and blessed Spirits that dwell for ever in his Presence. Now, to make us fit for such an *Employment*, the only *necessary* Qualities of Mind are an universal *Love*, and a profound *Humility*; which two are the *fundamental* Vertues of Religion; of which all the other Vertues are so many different *Operations*. 'Tis true, our *Love* and *Humility* will not have all the *same* Operations in the *other* World, as they have in *this*; because there we shall not have the *same* Occasions for them: For being placed above all *Sufferings* in the Enjoyment of the most *perfect* Good, we shall have no occasion either for the *passive* Vertues of *Patience*, and *Meekness*, and *Forgiveness* of Injuries; nor yet for those active Vertues which speak us distant from our Happiness; such as *Faith* and *Hope*; which shall be swallow'd up in *Vision* and *Fruition*. But tho' in that blessed State we shall have no occasion to express our *Love* and *Humility* in such Acts as these; yet without these two great Vertues, we shall be no ways capable of the Heavenly Employment: For what Pleasure can we take in *contemplating* the Being of God, if we do not love Him? Doubtless, our own *Antipathy* to the *Goodness* and *Purity* of His Nature, will either avert our Eyes from beholding him, or render the Sight of him *horrible* and *dreadful* to us. And if we do not contemplate him with an humble and lowly Mind, the *Sight* of his supereminent Perfections will either provoke our *Envy* or *Contempt*, make us *pine* to see our selves out-shone by him, or *contemn* his Glories out of an overweening Opinion of our own. Again, if we do not love God, we cannot *adore* him with a *free* and *cheerful* Mind; and if we are *proud* and *self-conceited*; instead of *God*, we shall adore our *Selves*, and become our own *Idols* and *Votaries*. So that without *Humility* and *Love*, we shall be no ways fit for the *other* part of that sweet Employment which consists in *conversing* with holy and blessed Spirits; for *their* Conversation being wholly regulated by the sacred Laws of *wise* and *holy* Friendship, and consisting in an everlasting Intercourse of *chaste* and *mutual* Indearments; no Soul can be capable of bearing a *Part* in it, that is not inspired with universal *Love* and great *Humility*: Both which are indispensably necessary to every *wise* and *friendly* Conversation. For where *Humility* is wanting, every Offence will kindle an unquenchable *Discord*. So that a *proud malicious* Nature can converse no where with Satisfaction; much less, with those blessed Souls, in whose most *pure* and *perfect* Friendship there is not the least Intermixture, either of *Flattery* or *Envy*: For being all perfectly *good*, and perfectly *happy*, they can neither over-value themselves, nor *envy* what another enjoys: So that in all their Conversation there is no Entertainment either for *Pride* or *Malice*; but on the contrary, there is nothing but what is distasteful to them: For where there are none that over-value either themselves or others, but every one loves every one with a sincere and inviolable Friendship, there can be no Conversation but what is *distasteful* to an *arrogant* and *malicious* Temper. What then should a proud malignant Spirit do among those *happy* Beings, a great part of whose Heaven consists in *rejoycing* in *each other's* Happiness? Doubtless, could such a Spirit be admitted into their Society, their Bliss would so *enrage* its Envy, their Perfection so *upbraid* its Baseness, that it would find nothing but Causes of *Discontent* in a Conversation so *disagreeable* to its Nature.

ture : So that without universal *Love* and *profound* Humility, there is nothing in Heaven that we can *enjoy* ; there being no *Employment* in that blessed State that is agreeable to the Genius of a *proud* and *malicious* Mind. So that unless our *bodily* Religion doth make us *really good*, by begetting in us those Heavenly Vertues of *Humility* and *Love*, it is altogether *impertinent* as to the disposing of us for Heaven ; and after all our *fasting*, and *praying*, and *bearing*, and *receiving* of Sacraments, we shall be found as remote from Heaven, and as unprepared for it, as if we had spent our time in gathering Cockles, or telling the Sands upon the Sea-shore. So that tho' this *bodily* Exercise be highly useful and *necessary* to our Reformation and Amendment, and is in it self a very *conducive Means* to *internal* Holiness and Goodness ; yet compared with Godliness it self, wherein our *Holiness* and *Goodness* doth consist, it is of very *little* Account, either as to the *reconciling* us to God, or the *perfecting* our Natures, or to the *entitling* us to Heaven, or *qualifying* us for it.

Now from hence we may learn, what the *true* End is of *external* and *bodily* Religion : It is not required for its own sake without any farther End or Intention ; but for the sake of *Godliness*, which is the ultimate Mark at which it ought to be levelled and directed. And therefore as he that would build an House, must make use of the *Means*, the *Tools* and *Materials* of Building ; but if he think to build the House, *merely* by using these Means, by cutting the Wood and carving in Stone, without any farther Aim or Intention, he will find himself extremely mistaken : So he that would be *godly*, must use the *Means* of Godliness ; he must *profess* the true Religion, and *pray*, and *bear*, and *receive* Sacraments ; but he that thinks he is *godly* merely because he uses these *Means*, tho' he doth not at all concern himself to direct them unto the *End* for which they were designed, doth but deceive and abuse his own Soul. For, for God's sake, what doth it signify for a Man to pray in his Family, and afterwards to go and *cheat* in his Shop ? To keep the Lord's Day strictly, and play the Knave all the Week after ? What doth it avail for a Man to *bear* the Word of God, if he make no Conscience of *obeying* it ? To receive the Sacrament of *Charity*, if he still retain *Hatred* and *Ill-will* to his Neighbours ? Do we think that God is so fond of these *instrumental* Duties of Religion, as for *their* sakes to dispense with these *gross* and *fulsome* Immoralities ? No, no ; these are things only fit to cheat Children and Fools withal. But let us not imagine, that the *wise* and *holy* God will be so imposed upon ; that when he hath ordained the *Duties* only as the *Means* of acquiring that universal *Purity* and *Goodness* which he principally *intends* and *requires*, he will be contented *barely* with your using these *Means*, whether the great Ends for which he designed them be ever obtained by you or no. If you should enjoin your Servant to copy out such a Letter or Manuscript, and for that End should require him to use Pen, Ink, and Paper ; would you not think him extremely absurd or insolent, should he come and shew you a large insignificant Scribble, and tell you that according to your Command he had used the Pen, Ink, and Paper, tho' indeed he had not transcribed one Word with them of what you did command and enjoin him ? And yet thus rudely and insolently do you deal with God, who place all your Religion in the *instrumental* Duties of it. God doth require of you that you should copy out his *Justice*, *Purity*, and *Goodness*, and transcribe them into your *own* Natures ; and in order to your doing of this, he hath prescrib'd you certain *Means* and *Instruments*, such as *Prayer*, and *Hearing*, and *receiving* of Sacraments ; and when you come to give him an account of that mighty *Task* he hath enjoined you, you shew him an insignificant *Flourish* of Religion, and have nothing to say for yourselves, but that according to his Appointment you have *prayed*, and *heard*, and *received* Sacraments : But you must confess, that with all these you have not transcribed one Tittle or *Iota* of that *Purity* and *Holiness* which he requir'd at your Hands. Is this a *proper* Account, do you think, to be given to the *wise* and *holy* Sovereign of the World ? Would you be thus mocked by your own Servants ? And dare you presume thus to mock the great God, between whom and you there is infinitely a greater Distance, than between you and the meanest Vassal about

about you? In the Name of God, for what End do you pray? Is it to *please* him with a fine Speech, or an humble and eloquent Address? Or is it to *persuade* him by your fawning Submissions, to befriend you in all your Wickedness and Rebellion against him? If either of these be your Aims, I must plainly tell you, you were as good save your Breath for some other purpose; but if you pray to him upon a sincere Design, to affect your Minds with an *awful Sence*; and to obtain of him *Grace* to enable you to repent and amend, and for *Pardon* and *Mercy* upon your unfeigned Repentance; then your Prayer must necessarily make you more meek, and humble, and industrious to please him, by a *free* and *generous* Obedience. To what purpose do you come to hear the Word of God? Do you think, it gratifies the Almighty, that you will please to give him the *Hearing*? Or that you meet in the Publick Assemblies to furnish your Heads with Notions, and your Tongues with Discourse? If this be your Opinion, I must needs tell you, you have very *mean* Apprehensions of God, to think him a Being capable to be pleas'd with such a *mean* and *inconsiderable* Trifle: But if you come with *humble, honest* and *teachable* Minds, to *learn* the Will of God, in order to your *obeying* it, your *Hearing* will necessarily lead you to the *Practice* of all those excellent *Vertues* which God requires at your Hands. What do you design when you receive the Sacrament? Is it to please God with offering *Vows* to him which you do not mean to *perform*? To pacifie him with a short Pang of Religious Passion, with shedding a few Tears over your bleeding Saviour? Or to get your Pardon seal'd with the Blood of the Covenant, without *Repentance* and *Reformation*? If so, I must needs tell you, you receive the Sacrament to no other purpose, but only to *deceive* and *abuse* your own Souls. But if you come with an honest Design, to *remember* the great things which your Saviour hath done for you; to *excite* your Love to him with the Spectacle of his Passion, and to *renew* your Communion with the Saints, and your Vows of Obedience unto God; you will then infallibly be made *better* by it, and be more and more accomplish'd in every Part of *true* and *real* Goodness. So that unless we perform this *outward* and *bodily* Religion, to the Purposes of *true* Godliness, we perform it to no Purpose at all. Let me therefore beseech you, even for God's sake, and your own Souls, do not rest in this *bodily* Religion: Think not that you have done *enough*, when you have *fasted*, and *prayed*, and *heard*, and *received* Sacraments: For if you do, you are short of your Duty, and will infallibly fall short of the *Reward* of it. These things, indeed, we must by no means *neglect*, they being the *Means* and *Instruments* of our Reformation: But if we do not use them as *such*, we take a great deal of Pains to no purpose: If they do not render us more *humble* and *charitable*, more *sober* and *heavenly-minded*, we have spent all our Labour in vain; and in the End shall have no other Reward for it, but the Portion of *Hypocrites* in the Lake of Fire and Brimstone.

DISCOURSE II.

UPON

EZEKIEL xviii. 30.

Repent and turn your selves from all your Transgressions ; so Iniquity shall not be your Ruin.

THE Great Design of this Chapter, is to answer an Objection which the Jews were wont to make against the *Righteousness* of God's Procedure with them, viz. That he punish'd them, not only for their *own*, but for their *Fathers* Sins. Which Objection, tho' it did not at all impeach the *Righteousness* of God, it being no Injustice in Him to inflict Temporal Evils upon the *Children* for their *Fathers* Sins ; yet that they might urge it no more as a Pretence of God's unrighteous Dealing with them, God assures them by his Prophet, that from thenceforth he would Remit that Right he had to make them smart for their *Fathers* Iniquities ; and inflict no other Punishment upon them, than was due for their own *Personal* Faults ; that if they did well, they should fare well, notwithstanding the Sins of their *Parents* ; and that if they did wickedly, they should surely smart for it, how well soever their *Parents* behav'd themselves. Nay, says he, your *Fathers* Merit or Demerit shall henceforth be so far from excusing you from, or exposing you to Punishment, that you shall not suffer for your own *past* Wickedness, if you Repent of it ; nor yet escape for your *past* Righteousness, if ye Revolt from it. This is the Sum of the whole Chapter to the 24th Verse. And yet, says he, *The House of Israel says, the Way of the Lord is not equal*. O House of Israel, are not my Ways equal ? Are not your Ways unequal ? Can any Method of Rewarding and Punishing be more equal than this I propose ? Or can any Accusation be more unjust than this of yours against me ? But know, 'tis not your *unjust* Reproaches shall make me desist from this my most Righteous Procedure. Therefore, says he, Verse the 30th, *I will judge you, O House of Israel, every one according to his Ways* : How much soever you reproach and calumniate me, I will strictly insist upon this Method of *Rewarding* and *Punishing* you according as you repent of, or persevere in your Iniquities : And to let you see, that I will be as ready to reward you upon the former, as to punish you upon the latter, do but for once make a Trial of me ; *Repent, and turn your selves from all your Transgressions*, and you shall surely find, that *your past Iniquity shall not be your Ruin*. The Sence of which Words resolves into Two Propositions :

1. That the *Iniquity* of any People or Nation tends directly to their Ruin.
2. That true *Repentance* and *Amendment* is the certain Way to prevent the Ruin which Iniquity tends to.

I begin with the First, that the Iniquity of any People or Nation, tends directly to their Ruin: *So it shall not*---- intimating, that if they did not repent, their Iniquity would certainly end in their Ruin. And of the Truth of this, the constant Experience of all Ages is a sufficient Testimony : For if you consult either Sacred or Prophane History, you will find, that Iniquity, like the Worm at the Root of *Jonah's* Gourd, hath many times blasted the most flourishing Kingdoms, pulled down

down their Banks, and laid them open to such Inundations of Misery, as have finally overwhelmed and destroy'd them. And those that have made the strictest Enquiries into Human Affairs, have constantly observed, that the *Rise and Fall* of Nations hath been more owing to their *Vertue and Vice*, than any other Cause, and that upon these two Hinges, generally, the Fates of Empires turn; that the Foundations of their *Rise* were laid in *vertuous, brave and generous* Actions; and that by *Wickedness and Corruption* of Manners, they were undermined, and sunk into a Final Ruin. But the Truth of this will yet more fully appear by considering how many Ways *Vice* doth contribute to the Ruin and Destruction of a Kingdom: All which I shall reduce to these Eight Heads.

1. It doth it by depriving Kingdoms and Nations of the Favour and Protection of God.
2. By inflicting positive Plagues and Punishments upon them.
3. By corrupting and insatuating their Counsels.
4. By melting and emasculating their Courage.
5. By breaking and disturbing their Order.
6. By dissolving their Unity and Concord.
7. By consuming their Wealth and Substance.
8. By debasing their Esteem and Reputation.

1. *Wickedness* directly tends to the *Ruin* of Kingdoms and Nations, as it deprives them of the *Divine* Favour and Protection. For if we acknowledge God to be the *Almighty Lord* and *Sovereign* of the World, we cannot but confess, that the *Strength and Establishment* of Kingdoms is founded in *His* Favour and Protection; that *his* Goodness, Wisdom and Power, are the Pillars upon which those vast and mighty Structures lean; and consequently, that if he withdraw from'em those necessary Supports, they cannot stand, but must inevitably sink under their own Weight, into irreparable Ruins. For nothing can subsist without God, and much less *Kingdoms and Nations*, which have so many Principles of Corruption lurking within their own Bowels, and in which there are compounded so many *boisterous* Passions, *repugnant* Humours, *inconsistent* Designs, and *contesting* Interests; all which, like the contrary *Qualities* of our Bodies, do by their mutual Jarring with one another, continually tend to the Dissolution of the whole. So that, did not the Wise and Almighty Providence of God continually superintend these *contrary* Principles, and by its skilful mingling them with one another, preserve them in a just and due Temper; those great and unweildy Bodies in which they do reside, would be every Moment in danger of being *diseased, corrupted and destroyed* by them. But now the Sins of Nations do mightily contribute to the *depriving* them of this Benefit of God's Providence and Protection: For how can any Kingdom or Nation expect, that God will continue to protect them in their *Rebellions* against Himself? That he who is so *implacable* an Enemy of *Wickedness*, and so *zealous* an Asserter of his own Honour and Authority, will employ his Power to patronize them in the *one*, and take their Part against the *other*: And if he withdraw his upholding Providence from a Nation, he needs do *no more*: For now it must sink of its own Accord; and like a *falling* House, when its Prop is remov'd, its Weight will bear it down, and quickly crush it into Ruins.

2. *Wickedness* tends to the Ruin of Kingdoms and Nations, not only by engaging God to withdraw his Protection from, but also to inflict positive Plagues and Punishments upon them. God being the Supreme Sovereign of the World, and especially of this World, Men, who are so extremely prone to contemn and violate the Laws of his Government; it is necessary, that since our *Hopes* and *Fears* are the Master springs of all our Motions, he should take especial care, as on the one hand to *allure* us to our Duty by the Hope of a *Reward*; so on the other, to *awe* us into it by the Fear of *Punishment*: And if he should not, there would be no confining such extravagant Creatures, as we are, within any Rule or Compass.

Now,

Now, as for *particular* Offenders, the great Scene of God's *Rewarding* and *Punishing* them, is the future State, where every Man must answer for himself, and receive the just Retributions of his own Actions : But as for sinful and virtuous *Nations*, they are capable only of being rewarded and punish'd in *this Life* ; there being no such thing as *particular* Nations and Kingdoms in the *Life to come* ; where *Heaven* and *Hell* are the two *Nations* into which the Spirits of Men are distributed : So that if wicked *Nations* were not punished *here* as such, they could never be punished at all. And if there were no such *Punishments* set up like *Banks* and *Shores* to break the Insolence, and check the overflowing *Wickedness* of Sinners, the whole World would soon become a *Sink* and *Deluge* of Iniquity : And therefore, tho' here God many times spares *particular* Offenders, there being a *future* State in which he can reckon with them and call them to a strict Account for all their Affronts and Provocations ; yet, 'tis very rare, if ever, that he suffers wicked Nations to go unpunish'd here ; because if he should, as such they would escape for ever. And how would it *weaken* the *Government* of the World, if when God sees a People confederate against him, blow the Trumpets of *Rebellion*, and gather into *Armies* to urge War against him, he should sit still with his Hands in his Bosom, and take no notice of it ? For tho' among Men, the *Multitude* of Offenders be many times the Cause of their *Impunity*, because of the *Weakness* of *Human Governments*, which are glad to spare, where they are not strong enough to *punish* ; yet in the Government of God, things are quite otherwise : No Combination of Sinners is too hard for Him, and the greater and more *numerous* the Offenders are, the more his *Justice* is concerned to vindicate the Affront. However, therefore God may pass by single Sinners in this World ; yet when a *Nation* combines against him, *when Hand joins in Hand, the Wicked shall not go unpunish'd*.

3. *Wickedness* tends to the *Ruin* of Kingdoms and Nations, as it contributes to the corrupting and infatuating of their *Counsels*. For *Vice* and *Wickedness* doth very much depress the Minds, and weaken the *Understandings* of Men ; it doth so warp their Judgments, and cast such Mists of *Prejudice* around their Reason, that they are not able to discern the *Issues* and *Consequents* of things : For when they are overpowered by their *Lusts*, their Affections will mis-lead their Minds, and impose upon them for Truth and Realities, their own unreasonable Wishes and Desires : And when we *advise* in the midst of a Company of head-strong *Passions* and *Appetites*, we are like *Rehoboam* amongst his young and *hair-brain'd* Counsellors, who represented things to him not as they were in themselves ; but according to *his own* Desires and Inclinations. And when the *Counsels* of a Nation are steered by its own *vicious* Affections, that will most commonly seem *best* which is most unreasonable, and so *Storms* will many times be mistaken for Calms, and Rocks for safe and quiet Harbours. No Man is fit to counsel for a *publick Good*, but he that is led by *simple* and *unbiassed* Reason ; because he only will attend impartially to the Reasons of things, and *accommodate* his Advices to the publick Necessities and Exigencies of Affairs : But when the Man himself is governed by an unreasonable *Appetite* or *Affection*, that will ever and anon intermingle with this Judgment and *biass* his Counsels towards its own unreasonable Desires and Inclinations. And when such blind Affections as *Pride* and *Ambition*, *Covetousness* and *Revenge*, sit at the Stern, and are the Pilots and Steer-men of a Kingdom ; how can it be expected but that in the midst of so many *Rocks* and *Quick-sands* that surround it, it shall be run a ground, or be split in pieces ?

4. *Wickedness* tends to the *Ruin* of Kingdoms and Nations as it contributes to *melt* and *emasculate* their *Courage*. For tho' it cannot be denied, but that the *Valour* and *Courage* of Nations is very much owing to the Temper of the *Climes* in which they are situate ; yet 'tis evident, that as *People* of the most effeminate *Climes*, have by *Vertue* been improved into *heroick* and *magnanimous*, as the *Romans* and *Persians* for instance ; so those of the most *hardy* and *couragious* *Climes* have many times by their *dissolute* Manners been broken and dispirited into the most wretched *Cowards* and *Poultrons* ; as the *English* for instance ; who tho' they have been

been ever remarked for a *People* of a *daring* and *undaunted Genius*, yet have sometimes been so melted by their own *Softness* and *Luxury*, as that they became Preys to every *Dog* that hunted them. And indeed *Softness*, *Luxury*, and *Wantonness*, are Vices that will effeminate the Spirits, and spoil the Strain of the most *valorous Nation*: For as Vertues are increased by Exercise, so they shrink and decay by Inactivity; and there is no State of Life that doth so *fetter* our Courage and restrain its Vigour and Activity, as that of *Idleness* and *Luxury*; in which after it hath stewed and dissolved a while, it will convert into the greatest *Baseness* and *Pusillanimity*: For an *intemperate Bowl*, a *Bed of Sloth* and a *Dalilah's Lap*, are Charms sufficient to effeminate a *Hero*, and bewitch a *Lion* into a timorous Hare. And as these *particular Vices* do naturally discourage a Nation; so Vice in general hath the same Effect: For it naturally impresses a Sence of *Guilt* upon the Mind, which fills it with such *Fears* and *Horrors*, as cannot but *weaken* and *dispirit* the hardiest and most daring Courage. For how can a Man be *courageous*, that is continually stung with the Remorses, and haunted with the restless *Furies* of his own guilty Mind; that carries a *Hell* within his own Bosom, and hath a thousand Guilts, like so many grim and ghastly Devils, continually staring him in the Face? Certainly, such an One must either lay by his *Reason* or his *Courage*, and become a *Coward*, or cease to be a Man. Hence it is said, *The Wicked fleeth when no Man pursueth; but the Righteous is bold as a Lion*, Prov. 28. 1. And when a Nation is thus dispirited by their own *Lusts* and *Guilts*, then are they ripe for *Ruin*, and fit to be made a Prey for every *Nimrod* that will hunt and invade them.

5. *Wickedness* tends to the *Ruin* of Kingdoms and Nations, as it breaks and dissolves their *Union*. For as true Religion knits Mens Hearts together by the indissoluble *Ligaments* of mutual *Love* and *Charity*; as it heals their *Spirits*, and corrects their *Passions*, and inspires their *Natures* with all those obliging *Graces* upon which the *Peace* and *Concord* of Society is founded; so on the contrary, *Vice* and *Wickedness* rends and divides the Hearts of Men, sows Seeds of *Discord* in their *Natures*, trets and inflames their *Spirits* against one another, and impregnates them with such *rude* and *barbarous Passions*, as do naturally render them *unsociable* to each other; such as *Pride* and *Ambition*, *Envy* and *Malice*, *Covetousness* and *Revenge*, which naturally tend to the *Dissolution* of Society, and the cutting in funder all the Cords of *Friendship* and good *Neighbourhood*. Hence is that of St. James, Chap. 4. 1. *From whence come Wars and Fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your Lusts that War in your Members?* Yea, doubtless, this is the Cause of all those *Discords* that spoil the Harmony of this *Moral World*, the *Pandora's Box* out of which have swarmed all those *Strifes* and *Contentions*, *Broils* and *Confusions* that have *destroyed* and *ruined* many flourishing Kingdoms. For tho' the most turbulent *Factions* are usually faced with *Zeal* for God; yet if you look beyond the *Outside*, you will always find, that most of the *Broils* that have been conducted under the display'd Banners of *Religion*, have been raised and led on by the *Devilish Passions* of those who have been the most zealous *Sticklers* and *Fomenters* of them. Thus *Vice*, you see, doth naturally divide the Nation; and tears the Members of it in funder: And our blessed *Saviour* assures us, that when a *Kingdom* is *divided against itself*, it is soon *brought to desolation*, Matthew 12. 25. For those *Divisions* do mightily impair the *Strength of a Kingdom*, which, like an impetuous Stream, being parted in several *Currents*, runs with far less Force, and is much more easily forded. And when once a Nation is torn and separated into *Factions*, it is at best, but like a *Confederate Army*; which, tho' it be united into one Body, hath several *contrary Interests* and *Designs*, which divides their Counsels and makes them *suspicious* of one another, and so less able to withstand the Force of an *united Enemy*: And in these Circumstances, what can be expected, but that either they should fall out among themselves, and sheath their Swords in one another's Bowels; or be made an easie Prey to the Power and Rapine of their common *Adversary*?

6. *Wickedness* tends to the *Ruin* of Kingdoms and Nations, as it disturbs them in their *Order* and regular *Administration*. For as *Religion* lays the Foundations of all good *Order* in a Kingdom; as it obliges the *Governours* to all those regular *Vertues* that make them publick Blessings, to *Justice*, and *Liberality*, to *Truth* and *Mercy*, to *Constancy* and *Magnanimity*; as it binds the subordinate *Instruments* and *Ministers* of *State* to *Fidelity* and *Diligence*; as it engages the *Subjects* to *Honour* and *Reverence*, to obey and submit to their *Governours*: So on the contrary, *Vice* and *Wickedness*, when it hath insinuated it self into a *Nation*, subverts the whole *Order* of it, and miserably confounds the *Course* of its *Administration*: It introduces into the *Government* *Opposition* and *Tyranny*, *Fraud* and *Cruelty*, *Cowardize* and *Inconstancy*; it perverts the *Ministers* of it into *Traytors* and *Robbers*, and turns its *Courts* of *Justice* into *Dens* of *Thieves*; it alienates the *Subjects* from their *Duty* and *Allegiance*, makes them *beady* and *high-minded*, *rude* and *pragmatical*, *factionous* and *ungovernable*; and in a word, spreads such a poisonous *Contagion* over all the vital *Parts* of a *Nation*, as without a speedy *Cure*, must necessarily end in the *Ruin* and *Desolation* of the whole. For such universal *Disorders* are as the *Symptoms* of *Death* upon a *Nation*; and like those gentler *Convulsions* within the *Bowels* of the *Earth*, do portend the *Approach* of some dreadful *Earthquake*. And as when the whole *Mass* of *Blood* and *Humours* is corrupted, the *Body* is sick unto *Death*, and will putrefie apace into a *Car-kass*; thus when a *Kingdom* is thus universally disordered, when as the *Prophet* expresses it, *the whole Head is sick, and the whole Heart is faint*; when from the *Crown* of the *Head* to the *Sole* of the *Foot*, there is no *Soundness* in it, but all is covered with *Wounds*, and *Bruises*, and *putrefying Sores*; what can be expected, but a *speedy* and a *fatal* Period?

7. *Wickedness* tends to the *Ruin* of Kingdoms and Nations, as it consumes their *Wealth* and *Substance*. Whilst *Vertue* and *Religion* do bear sway in the *Nation*, to be sure, it is of a *frugal* and *industrious Genius*; the *People* will attend to their own *Business*, and not be intermeddling pragmatically in another's *Dioecesis*; they enjoy themselves within the *Bounds* of *Modesty* and *Sobriety*, and make a *Conscience* of out spending their *Fortunes*, and living above their proper *Ranks* and *Degrees* in the *World*. And whilst every *Member* thus acts within its proper *Sphere*, the *Nation* cannot but thrive and prosper, each one by his honest *Frugality* and *Industry* being enabled upon all *Occasions* to contribute to the *Defence* and *Support* of the *Publick*. But when once *Vice* and *Wickedness* have thrust out *Vertue*, and overspread the *Nation*, it introduces in its room so many costly, chargeable, and prodigal *Lusts*, as will soon exhaust its *Wealth*, and suck the *Blood* out of its *Veins*. Then in comes *Idleness*, and like a *Drone*, lives upon the Acquests of *Industry*: Then *Pride* begins to spread her *Peacocks Train*, and flaunt out what *Frugality* had saved, in gorgeous *Apparel* and sumptuous *Furniture*. Then *Drunkenness* and *Gluttony* begin to call out for *Meat* and *Drink* Offerings, to their God, the *Belly*; and *Lust* and *Wantonness* to crave *Provisions* to feed and pamper their insatiate *Appetites*: In a word, then comes in such a Pack of greedy *Hell hounds* to devour the *Fruits* of our past *Frugality* and *Industry*, as are sufficient to drain and exhaust the *Indies*. And when there are so many *Locusts* swarming in every *Corner* of the *Land*, what can be expected, but that at last, they should eat up every green *Thing*, and devour the *Fruits* of every *Tree*? For we may maintain whole *Fleets* and *Armies* at a cheaper rate, than a few extravagant *Lusts*; and let but *Pride* and *Idleness*, *Intemperance* and *Wantonness* be let loose, and allow'd to sponge a while upon a *Nation*, and in a little time they shall more impoverish and consume its *Substance*, than a long and wasting *War*. And when the *Wealth* of a *Nation*, which is the vital *Blood* that runs and circulates about its *Veins* and *Arteries*, is thus continually sucked by these insatiate *Daughters of the Horse-leech* that still cry out, *Give, Give*; its *Life* must necessarily ebb by degrees, and at the last it must faint away and expire.

8. And Lastly, *Wickedness* tends to the Ruin of *Kingdoms* and *Nations*, as it impairs and debases their Esteem and Reputation. *Righteousness exalteth a Nation*, saith the Wise Man, *but Sin is the Reproach of any People*, Prov. 14. 34. For *Vice* hath such a natural *Baseness* and *Uncomeliness* in it, that whenever it appears in its own Colours, it creates a mighty *Disesteem* of it self in the Minds of all that behold it; and wherever it goes, it carries an *infamous* Character along with it; it blasts the Reputation of its own Votaries, covers their Heads with Shame and Dishonour, causes them to *rot* above ground, and to *stink* alive; and when they are dead, writes a *black* and *inglorious* Memory on their Graves.

When therefore this Foul and Noisome Leprosie hath spread it self over the Face of a Nation, it must necessarily render it a horrid and monstrous Spectacle unto all that behold it: And tho' the *Universality* of Sin may give it some Reputation, where its *Throne* and *Empire* is seated, and render it *genteel* and *fashionable* among its own Slaves and Vassals; yet 'tis such a Reputation, as hath no Bottom to support it. For unless my Honour be founded in some *real Excellency*, it is not in *me*, but in the *Conceit* of him that honours me: His Fancy is the *Mint* where all my Reputation is coined; and 'tis at his Pleasure to stamp me an *Angel* or a *Devil*. So that tho' *Vice* may sometimes be in Vogue, where it is universally propagated; yet it being a Vogue without Foundation, all the Credit it gives, is only a *fantastick* Being; a thing that is only the Sport and Dalliance of *vulgar* Breath and *popular* Noise: But whilst its own *blind* Votaries sing *Hosanna's* to it, and strew its Way with Palms, all the World besides exclaim against, and cry unanimously, *Crucify* it, *Crucify* it. So that while it is honour'd at home, it is vilified abroad; and tho' we may sometimes be so besotted, as to reckon it our Glory; yet, to be sure, all wise and indifferent Judges will upbraid it to us as our Shame. For what *wicked* Nation is there that hath ever escaped the Reproaches and Infamy of Mankind, that hath abandoned it self to *Fraud* and *Treachery*, to *Softness* and *Effeminacy*, to *Oppression* and *Cruelty*; and hath not thereupon drawn upon it self the Scorn and Hissing of all the Nations round about it? And when a People are grown Cheap and Despicable in their Neighbours Eyes; when their *Faith* is suspected, their *Truth* branded, and their *Vertue* stained and blemished; what Support or friendly Intercourse can they expect from them? Who will trust to their Leagues or Confederacies, or enter into Commerce with them, who have neither *Truth* nor *Justice* to secure them? For so much Reputation as the Nation loses, so much Strength it loses: For 'tis a mighty Strength to a People to be *fear'd* and *lov'd* by their Neighbouring Nations; neither of which they can expect to be, when once they have sunk their Reputation: For who will dread an *effeminate* People, softened with Luxury and Voluptuousness? Or who will love a *profligate* People, distained with Cruelty and Falshood? And when a People hath not Credit enough to make them either *fear'd* or *lov'd*, if then they are not *ruin'd* or *destroy'd*, it is because their Enemies either think it not worth the while, or are not at leisure to attempt it.

And thus you see how many Ways *Wickedness* contributes to the Ruin of a Nation. So that when *Wickedness* hath overspread a People, and is become their Epidemical Disease, it doth not only bode their approaching Fate, but hastens it, and pulls it headlong down upon them; and without a Miracle, they must reform, or *sink* or *perish*. For unless God alters the Natural Course of Things, and hinders necessary Causes from producing their Effects, it will be as impossible to hinder the Ruin of a Kingdom that is overwhelmed with *Wickedness*, and obstinately continues so, as it is to save a House from burning, that is wrapped and compassed about with Flames; because the *Burning* of a House is not a more necessary Effect of the *Flames* that surround it, than the Ruin of a Nation is of the Sins that overspread it. One Way therefore there is left, and only one, for such a Nation to save it self, and that is by *Repentance*. Which brings me to the next Proposition in the Text, That *true* Repentance and Amendment is the certain Way to prevent that Ruin which our *Iniquities* threaten. *Repent and turn your selves from all your Transgressions, so Iniquity shall not be your Ruin*. But before I enter upon

this Proposition, I shall draw a few practical Inferences from what hath been said.

1. From hence I infer, what Plagues and Nuisances *wicked Men* are to a *Kingdom*, since the Tendency of Sin in so many Particulars is so very Destructive to its Wellfare and Interest. These are the grand Disturbers of *Israel*, the *wretched Incendiaries* that set all in Flames and Combustions about them: Their Sins are the *Trains* that do give Fire to those *Mines* of Ruin that sink and tear up Kingdoms, and their Breasts are the *Seminaries* and *Harbourers* of those Traitors that do conspire against, and undermine our Peace and Happiness. For as for those *Traitors* without, tho' they were a thousand times, if possible, more *crafty*, and *restless*, and *malicious* than they are, we might despise their Hellish Plots and Intreagues, and smile at their vain Attempts, did not our Sins contribute to make us miserable: But when we by our own *Wickedness* will joyn Hands with their Restless Craft and Malice, assist them against our selves, and co-operate with 'em to our own Destruction, what Remedy is there for us? When the Sins of our *Friends* are conspiring our Ruin together with the Malice of our *Enemies*, how can we hope either wholly to escape, or much longer to defer it? For if ever that Destruction come upon us, which hath been so long designing, and is now hanging over us, this Epitaph will very well fit our Tombs; *Here lies a miserable Nation, whose Ruin is owing more to their own Sins, than to all the Designs and Powers of their Enemies.* Consider this therefore, O you *Sinners* in this our *Sion*: You are, tho' you know it not, in a strict Confederacy with the *Priests* and *Jesuits*, against your Native *Country*, against the *Protestant Religion*, and against the *Liberties* and *Properties* of *Englishmen*: You are accessory to all those *Treasons* which they have contrived; and are still contriving against the *Religion*, and *Laws*, and *Government* of the Nation: And if ever they thrive and take Effect (which the *God* of Heaven avert) we may thank you for *prospering* and *succeeding* them; who by your *Pride* and *Sensuality*, your *Fraud* and *Faction*, your *Covetousness* and *Oppression*, do what in you lies to ripen and give a prosperous Birth to the *Treasonous* Designs of our common *Adversaries*. And therefore, if yet you have any regard either for this sinking *Kingdom*, whose Womb bore you, or to this bleeding *Church*, whose Paps gave you suck (both which in the most sorrowful Postures that a *Church* and *Kingdom* can be well reduc'd to, are now crying out unto you, O you, our cruel and unnatural Children, have pity upon us! have pity upon us!) If, I say, you have any *Regard*, either for the one or the other, O be now at last *persuaded* to commiserate their Deplorable Condition, to take off those *loud-mouth'd Sins* you have set upon them, and are now, like a *Pack of Hounds*, tearing and worrying them in Pieces.

2. From hence I infer, what is the true Cause of those many *National Evils* which we feel and justly fear. For since Iniquity doth so directly tend to the *Ruin* of a *Nation*, to what other Cause may we more truly attribute either those present, or those future Evils, that have, or shall befall us? When any *Calamity* befalls us, we are apt to ascribe it all, either to *false*, or else to *partial* Causes; and if we reckon *Sin* among the Causes, to be sure, we skip and overlook our own. 'Tis the *Carelessness* or *ill Design* of this, or t'other Minister of State, cries one; 'tis the *Peevishness* and *Faction* of such a Gang and Party, cries another; 'tis the *Rigour* and *Severity* of those who comply with, and contend for the *Legal Establishment*, cries a third: When these, at most, are but a *partial* Cause, and the main Spring, God knows, of all our Mischiefs, lies within our own *Bosoms*. And tho' many of us are sensible, as we cannot well be otherwise, that Sin hath a great Hand in all our *Sufferings* and *Calamities*; yet alas, how few are there that reckon their own Sins into the Tale! They are the Sins of the *Court*, cries the *City*; and the Sins of the *City*, cries the *Country*; they are the Sins of the *Church*, cries the *Separatist*; and the Sins of the *Clergy*, cries the *Layity*; and the Sins of the *Gentry*, cries the *Commonalty*. Thus every one washes his own Hands; and like the *Whore* in the *Proverbs*, wipes his Mouth, and cries, *I have done no Wickedness*: So that, tho' none are guiltless, and every one stands accused by his Antagonist;

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yet, if all may be believed, none are guilty : And so the *Judgments* of *God* are posited from *Tithing* to *Tithing*, from one Party of Men to another, and no body will own them, tho' they call us all *Father* ; which is just as if a *Company* of *People* in a dreadful Conflagration, should fall a contending with one another at whose House the Fire began, and in the mean time permit it quietly to burn on till it had consumed all before it. Whereas if we would put a Stop to the *Judgments* that begin to *flame* about our Ears, we should every one reflect upon our selves, and bring our *Buckets* of *penitential* Tears to extinguish that part of them which our own Sins have kindled : And if we would but do thus, if every Man would smite upon his own *Thigh*, and cry, *Lord what have I done ?* Then we might hope to see the growing Flame put out, and quenched, that now waves its *curled* Head, and threatens *universal* Ruin : But till once we are brought to a sorrowful Sence of our own Sins, and of the Share they contribute to the *publick* Mischiefs, we are not so much as in the way of Recovery. For since the Cause of the Kingdom's Sickness, lies, God knows, in all our Breasts, how is it possible we should conspire to remove the whole, till we are every Man sensible of his own part ? Let us therefore search and examine our own Hearts, what we have contributed to the *publick* Disease, and every one purge out his own particular Share of it ; and then to be sure, all will soon be well again, and this poor *Kingdom*, that hath so many Years been languishing under the Sins of its *Natives*, and is now reduced almost to its last *Gasp*, will yet recover, and once more flourish in perfect *Health* and *Vigour*.

3. From hence I infer, what is the just *Character* of those Men who by their *Principles* and *Practices* contribute to the Ruin of *Kingdoms*. For since Iniquity so directly tends to a publick *Ruin*, we may be sure, that those *Principles* and *Practices* that naturally tend to the same end, are *Principles* and *Practices* of Iniquity ; and yet Good *God* ! how many such are there, that under the fair Disguises of *Christian* Doctrines and Godly Zeal, and with their demure Looks and religious Countenances do many time seduce and cajole weak and well-disposed Minds into such seditious Gangs, mutinous Practices and treasonous Conspiracies, as do too often end, either in their own Ruin, or their native Countrey's. Thus in the *Church* of *Rome* what horrid and barbarous Practices have there been occasioned by those *Anti-Christian* Doctrines of the Lawfulness of destroying *Heretics*, deposing and murdering of Kings ! How many Kings and Emperors have there been Excommunicated, butchered and destroyed by them ? How many flourishing *Kingdoms* have there been depopulated, wasted and imbrewed in Blood by them ? How many *Millions* of Men, Women and Children, have there been sacrificed to the Demands of these inhuman and blood-thirsty Principles ? Insomuch that it may be justly questioned, whether for 600 Years together, these Pretences of *Christianity* did not destroy more Lives than *Christianity* it self hath sav'd Souls. And would to God that these destroying Principles had been for ever confined within the Pale of that degenerate Church ! Then might our Reformation have boldly challenged to it self the Spirit of Peace and Meekness, of unbounded Charity, unstain'd Loyalty and firm Allegiance, and without a Blush in its Face, have upbraided that Mother of Harlots with being the only Patroness of Treasons, and Rebellions, and Confusion. But alas, those that have turn'd the World upside down, are come hither also, and have sown their mischievous Principles in our fruitful Fields, where they have sprung up many an ill Weed ; and these, God knows, have grown apace. For not to touch upon the old Sores, which for our own Credits sake and our Religions, O would to God were lost in perpetual Oblivion ; how many are there this day among us, that out of a pretence of Zeal for God and Religion, make it their Business to divide and tear, rend and distract the *Kingdom* ? Who by starting Jealousies and ill Surmises, fetching and carrying Tales and scandalous Reports against the Government, suggesting Miscarriages of State that never were, and blackening and aggravating those that are, do what in them lies, to blow up the Discontents of the Kingdom into an intestine Flame ; and, whilst the common Enemy is boring a Hole in the Bottom, of the Ship, do set
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the *Mariners* together by the Ears, that so while they are scuffling within, they may neglect the Danger from without, till one common Ruin involves them all, and sinks them together with their Swords in one another's Bowels. And tho' it is notorious to all the World, what a mighty *Bulwark* this *Church* hath always been to the Reform'd Religion, how much it hath been the Dread and Envy of Rome, and the Mark of her Power and Malice; how all her *Agents* have constantly conspired to fight neither against small nor great; but against the Church of *England*, in hope that if once this *Master-fort* were dismantled, they should quickly force the lesser *Garisons* and *Citadels* to surrender; yet how, many Parties have we among our selves, who yet pretend great Zeal for the *Reformation*, that industriously set themselves to batter down its Sanctuary about its Ears; that join their Throats in one common Cry with the *Priests* and *Jesuits*, *Down with her, down with her, even to the Ground*; and all this to gratifie their Prejudice against a few innocent and indifferent *Rites*, which, as private *Communicants* they are very little, if at all, concerned in. I do not charge these Men with a *Popish* Design, tho' I am sure they charge us with it upon far less Reason: But this I say, and will maintain it, that whilst they thus industriously set themselves to tear open the Wounds of our *Church*, and widen them into incurable *Schisms*, they take a most effectual Course to open the Gap for *Popery* which stands at the Door, and only waits till the Breach is wide enough for it to enter.

To conclude all therefore, seeing it is the Sin and Wickedness of *People* and *Nations* that is the main Spring of their Ruin and Destruction, let us, as we would escape that dismal Ruin, which for several Years hath hung over our *Heads*, and hath been pouring it self upon the Heads of several neighbouring *Countries*, and *Nations*, betake our selves to a deep *Humiliation* for, and hearty Repentance of our *Sins*, which threaten us more than all the Powers of our most powerful *Enemies*. We are now engaged in a War against a great Prince, who hath not only by a most salvage and barbarous Persecution of his own Subjects, proclaimed himself a mortal Enemy to our Religion; but also by his perfidious Violations of the Law of *Nations*, his Infractions of the most sacred Ties and Obligations, and his unparallel'd Cruelties towards all that have fallen within the Reach of his Power, hath rendered himself the common Enemy of Mankind, and seems to have been raised up on purpose by God to be a Plague and Scourge of a wicked World; his Power having for several Years hung over all *Christendom*, like a dismal Cloud charged with Thunder and Lightning, and having discharged it self upon several *Countries* and *Nations* in such prodigious Showers of *Blood*, and Tempests of Ruin and Devastation, as scarce any History can parallel: Against this mischievous Power that glories in nothing but *Outrage*, and Triumphs upon the Ruins of Mankind, we are now engaged in conjunction with almost all the *Christian World*, in a common Defence; there being no Remedy left us, but either to repel and vanquish it, or to lie at its Feet, and tamely submit our selves to be trampled into Destruction by it: Nor is there any Nation under the Cope of *Heaven* that hath greater Advantages of curbing it in its Career than our own, if our own *Sins* and intestine Divisions do not spoil all. Wherefore, as we hope to succeed in this our necessary Defence of our Religion, and our native *Countrey*, let us every one in our places endeavour, by laying aside all our Malice and Revenge, our Pride and Faction; to cement those unhappy Breaches that are among our selves, and all betake our selves to a serious and hearty Repentance for our own *Sins*; that thereby we may reconcile our selves to God, and engage his Almighty Power to fight for us.

And thus I have done with the First Proposition contain'd in these Words, [*Repent and turn your selves from all your Transgressions, so Iniquity shall not be your Ruin*] That the Iniquity of a *People* or *Nation* tends directly to their Ruin. And shall now proceed to the Second; *viz.*

That true *Repentance* and *Amendment* is the most effectual Way to prevent that Ruin which our Iniquities do so naturally bring upon us.

This

This it is upon a twofold Influence it hath,

1. Upon God.
2. Upon our Selves.

1. It hath a powerful Influence upon God, who is the *Sovereign Arbitrator* of the Fate of *Nations*, and doth dispose of their Ruin and Happiness as he pleases. For he being the *Sovereign Lord* of the World, and Supreme Moderator of Issues and Events, there is no particular *Kingdom* or *Nation* that is exempt from his *Jurisdiction* and *Disposal*; and 'tis in his Power alone to determine of every one of them whether they shall be happy or miserable. *It is the Lord that killeth, and that maketh alive; that bringeth down to the Grave, and bringeth up; the Lord that maketh poor and maketh rich, that bringeth low, and lifteth up,* 1 Sam. 2. 6. 7. And as he thus disposes of the Fate of particular *Persons*, so he doth much more of the Fate of particular *Nations*: *For 'tis he that encreases the Nations, and destroyeth them; he that enlargeth the Nations, and streightneth them,* Job 12. 23. And Dan. 4. 17. it is said, that *the most High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.* And in 2 Kings 19. 15. *Hezekiah* thus addresses to him, *Thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the Kingdoms of the Earth.* And if the Government and Disposal of *Nations* be in God's Hand, as you see it is, then whatsoever hath an Influence upon God, to oblige and indear him to a *Nation*, must needs effectually conduce to its *Recovery* and *Welfare*; because it makes Him its Friend, who alone can make it *happy* and *miserable*: And that which indears God to us, who alone hath Power to rescue and recover us, must need effectually conduce to our *Recovery*. Now that *Repentance* hath such an Influence upon God, will evidently appear whether we consider it,

1. As an Act of natural *Justice* and *Rectitude*; or.
 2. As the *primary* End and Design of *Punishment*; or,
 3. As the best *Reparation* we can make him for our *Rebellions* against him;
- or,
4. As the *Condition* upon which he hath voluntarily obliged himself to be reconciled unto us.

1. Consider it as an Act of natural *Justice* and *Rectitude*; and as such it must needs have a powerful Influence upon God: For *Justice* or *Rectitude* of Choice and Action, are everlastingly founded in the Nature of God, to whom it is as natural to govern himself and all his Actions by the *best* and *purest* Reason, as it is to exist or live. So that whatsoever hath natural *Rectitude* in it, and is squared and regulated by right Reason, must needs be *harmonious* to the Nature of God, and consequently, doth as naturally please and gratifie Him, as a musical Note doth a musical Ear: For every Nature hath a delightful *Gust* and *Relish* of that which is agreeable to it self; and therefore since it is natural to God himself to act according to the *Eternal Reasons* of things, to see others act so too, must needs be grateful to his Nature; but to *repent*, is the most *reasonable* Action that sinful Creatures can perform. For if it be best and most reasonable, *not* to do *amiss* at all, then doubtless, when we do *amiss*, the next most reasonable, is to resolve to do so *no more*; there being the *same* Reason why he that hath sinned, should sin *no more*, as why he that hath not, should not sin at all. And therefore, I cannot but wonder at the wild *Affertion* of some of our *Philosophical Sinners*, that to *repent* is an Argument of *Meanness* of Spirit; and discovers in us a weak and irresolute Mind; as if, because I have plaid the fool, I must resolve to be a Fool for ever, for fear of being accounted weak and irresolute; as if to change a mean and base Resolution, were a piece of Meanness and Baseness. Indeed, to enter into base Resolutions, argues a base or inconsiderate Spirit; but to revoke them, is so far from being base or mean, that it is highly rational and generous; there being the *same* Reason for the revoking a bad Resolution, as there is against the making it; and next to *not* yielding

yielding to an unreasonable Motion, the highest Bravery in a reasonable Nature, is, *not* to persist in it. For if we are Reasonable Beings, our Strength and Bravery must consist in being *constant* to our Reason; but to be *constant against* it, is to be constant *Fools* or constant *Knaves*, or both: And if this be the Character of a bravely *resolute* Mind, much good may it do those Heroick Sinners, that count it a Reproach to Repent. For the main of Repentance consists in the changing of unreasonable Resolutions, than which no Change can be more agreeable to the Eternal Laws of Reason: And these *Laws* being founded in the Nature of God, this Change must be infinitely agreeable to him, and have a most powerful Influence upon him. For since to *repent*, is the most reasonable Action that a Sinner can do, by what can we sinful *Creatures* more effectually endear our selves to God; who being most reasonable Himself, must needs be affected with that which is most reasonable in us.

2. Consider *Repentance* as the primary End and Design of Punishment; and as such, it must needs have a powerful Influence upon God. For there being no such thing as a *blind unreasonable Vengeance* in the Nature of God, he cannot be supposed to punish for Punishment sake; since that would be to inflict Misery on others merely to sport and recreate his own *Revenge*; that being the only Passion in Nature which a pure Mischief can gratifie or please. Since therefore there is no *such* Affection in the Nature of *God*, we may be sure, he doth not punish to please himself, but to *reform* and *amend* his Criminal Creatures; and that it is for the Good that Punishment doth *us*, and not for any Good that it doth *Him*, that he chooseth and inflicts it upon us: For he needs not our Misery to make him happy; being most compleatly happy already, in the immense Perfection of his own Nature: And it is nothing but the Want of Happiness in it self, that makes any *Being* desire or design *another's* Misery. Since therefore *God* cannot be supposed to design our Punishment, under the Notion of a *pure* Misery, it hence necessarily follows, that if he designs any thing, as to be sure he doth, it must be to do others good by it; and consequently, that since it is for the sake of this *Good*, that he inflicts it, he will most readily dispense with it, if *that* be but answer'd and obtain'd without it. But now our Repentance doth in a great measure answer and supply the End of our Punishment; which is either to *reform* us when we have done amiss, or to warn others by our Example, not to tread in our Footsteps; both which Ends are in an high Degree obtained in our *unfeigned Repentance*. For if we heartily Repent of our past Iniquities, we shall be sure to Amend them for the future: And it is impossible *that* Repentance should be true, which doth not upon the first Opportunity commence into an actual *Reformation*: And so, if it be true also, it will render us exemplary Warnings unto others; for it will inflict upon us such *bitter* Sorrows, such *deep* Remorses, and *stinging* Reflections, as will render us almost as great and eminent *Examples* of the Evil and Folly of our Sins, as the Punishments that were intended against them: And those of our Brethren in Iniquity, that will take no Warning by us, when they see the Throbs and Agonies of our Repentance, how it pierces, wounds and mortifies our Souls; in all probability, would be as little affected, should they instead of that, see the Hand of God upon us, *chastening* and *correcting* us for our Follies. For he that heartily *repents*, makes almost as woful an Experiment of the Folly and Evil of his Sin, as he that hath felt the Punishment of it: And next to a bleeding punish'd Criminal, there is no such Example of the Madness of Sin, as a weeping, merciful and dejected Penitent. Since therefore in both these respects *Repentance* doth so effectually supply the Designs of our Punishment, we may be sure the merciful God who doth always punish in order to those Designs, will be very much influenc'd by it. For every *Agent* is satisfied when it hath its End; and therefore since our *Repentance* will supply those Ends which God design'd in our *Punishment*, we may be sure, it will highly please and gratifie him: For in our Repentance he hath what he aimed at, when he design'd to *punish* us; and to be sure, a good God will never be so fond of the *Miseries* of his *Creatures*, as to punish them to no purpose.

3. Consider *Repentance* as the best *Reparation* we can make for our past Sins and Rebellions; and as such also it must needs have a mighty Influence upon God. 'Tis true, for *Sinners* to make a full *Reparation* to God for the *Affronts* and *Dishonours* they have cast upon him, is impossible; because what they have *done*, they can no more *undo*, than make what is *past*, never to have *been*. But yet, he that *heartily repents* of his former *Sins*, forasmuch as he *hates* and *laments* them, and wishes from his Soul that he had never done them, doth hereby morally cancel and revoke them: For this universal Act of *Nolition* extending to all his past bad Choices, tho' it cannot so undo, as to cause them not to have been; yet it doth so *unwill* and *unchoose* them, as if they *were not*, they should *never be*. 'Tis true, God being our Supreme Lord and Law-giver, the only *complete* Satisfaction we can personally render him, is, *perfect* unfinning Obedience (as all good and virtuous ones are) God hath the *same* Right to it, as he had to that wherein we failed; and 'tis impossible that by satisfying *one* Debt, we should make a full Re-payment of *another*. But of all our alter-*Reparations*, there is none approaches so near to *Innocence* and unfinning Obedience, as this of *unfeigned* Repentance: For all the difference between an *innocent* Person, and a *true* Penitent, is only this, that the former never *chose* to sin, and the latter hath *unchosen* all his sinful Choices; the one did not sin when it was in his power to do it; the other would not have sinned, if it were in his power not to do it. So that tho' Repentance is by no means equivalent to *Innocence*; yet because of all the after-Acts of a *Novent* Person, it makes the nearest Approach to it, it necessarily *follows*, that it is the best and highest *Reparation* that any *sinful* Creature can make to an *offended* God. What better *Reparation* can I make for the Delight and Pleasure I have taken in offending him, than to submit my self to the Pains and Anguish of a *bitter* and *severe* Repentance for it? How can I more effectually repair the many *Dishonours* I have done him by my *base* and *impious* Actions, the *shameless* Affronts I have put upon him, than by laying my stubborn Will at his Feet, putting on Shame and Confusion of Face, and abhorring my self in Dust and Ashes before him. This being therefore the *best* Satisfaction that such a Sinful People as we are, can make to our *offended*, but most *merciful* God, we may justly hope, that if we render him *this*, it will have an auspicious Influence upon him to *incline* him towards us, and *avert* his just Displeasure from us. When he shall see us prostrate at his Feet, acknowledging with *sorrowful* Hearts the infinite *Injuries* we have done him, offering him all the *poor* *Amends* we can make him, and *grieving* that we can offer him no more; such a *moving* Spectacle cannot but kindle in him a Relenting towards us, and cause his *propitious* Bowels to resound with *Eccho's* of Mercy.

4. And Lastly, Consider Repentance as the Condition upon which God hath voluntarily engaged himself to be reconciled unto us; and as such also it must needs have a *powerful* Influence upon him. So in the Text, you see, he hath obliged himself, upon the Repentance of wicked People, to interpose between their Sin and Ruin. So also *Job* 36. 8, 9, 10, 11. you have an excellent Account of God's Readiness to relieve a repenting People: *In their Adversity, if they be bound in Fetters, and holden in Cords of Affliction, then he sheweth them their Work and their Transgression wherein they have exceeded. He openeth also their Ears to Discipline, and commandeth that they return from their Iniquity. If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their Days in Prosperity, and their Tears in Pleasure.* But this perhaps, you will say, is only a Relation of what God usually doth, and not a Promise by which he obliges himself always to do so well: But it supposes such a Promise on God's Part; else there could have been no sure Foundation for *Elihu* to have promised it. But then *Isai.* 1. 16, 17, 18. you have God's own Word for it: *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the Evil of your Doings from before mine Eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be white as Snow; though they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the Land.* So also *Hosea* 14. 1, 2, 4. O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine Iniquity. Take with you Words, and turn to the Lord, say

unto him, take away all Iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render thee the Calves of our Lips. To which in the 4th Verse God returns this Answer of Mercy; *I will heal their Backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine Anger is turned away from him. I will be as the Dew unto Israel, he shall grow as a Lilly, and cast forth his Roots as Lebanon.* But these Promises, perhaps, you will say, respect *Israel* only, and consequently ought not to be extended unto other Nations: Well then, let us see in the last place, what he hath said to Nations in general, *Jer. 18. 7, 8. At what time I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it, if that Nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil that I thought to do unto them.* So that what he had promised before to *Israel* his People, here extends to all Nations, viz. that upon their Repentance he will be favourable to them, and repent of the Evil he intended against them: Which gives us as great a Certainty of the good Influence of our Repentance upon him, as we can have of his Eternal Truth, which is the Foundation of all Certainty. So that, if to have God for our Friend, can contribute any thing to the saving us from an impending Ruin, then must our Repentance, which makes him our Friend, be so far the Means of our Salvation.

2. As Repentance hath a great Influence upon God, to move and incline him to rescue us from Ruin; so it hath also a mighty Influence upon us towards the preventing and obviating our Ruin: So that tho' there were no such thing as a God for it to work upon, and engage in our Defence and Protection; or tho' that God should wholly withdraw himself from Action, and absolutely refuse to intermeddle in our Affairs; yet would our Repentance it self, by its own natural and necessary Influence, most effectually operate towards the Prevention of that publick Ruin; and that these four Ways:

1. As it will throughly awaken us into a due Sense of our Danger.
2. As it will animate and encourage us with the Hope of Success upon the Use of due and proper Means.
3. As it will take us off from those mischievous Actions which do so necessarily contribute to our Ruin.
4. As it will put us upon such a regular Course of Action, as doth naturally tend to the publick Good. In all which respects I shall shew you, it would be an effectual Means of our Recovery.

1. True Repentance naturally awakens us into a due and serious Sense of our Danger. For a vicious Life doth naturally lull Men into a *sottish* and *senseless* Security: It makes them stupid and reckless, and bereaves them of their natural Foresight and Sagacity: For besides that it takes off their Minds from the Exercise of Reason, and insatuates them with weak and phantastick Prejudices; it renders them so soft and indulgent to their own *luxurious* and *effeminate* Genius, that they cannot endure any sad or serious Thoughts should intermingle with their jovial Airs. So that if Danger stands at any distance from them, they wilfully wink at it, and are afraid to look it in the Face, lest it should suggest such Thoughts to them, as would disturb the Scenes of their Mirth, and dash their Draughts of sinful Pleasures with Wormwood. Hence *Amos 6. 1, 3*, it is made the Character of the wicked *Israelites* that lived at Ease in *Zion*, that they put far from them the evil Day; that is, they would not entertain a Thought of the Nearness of their Danger, lest it should prove a Thorn in their Pillows, and disturb their soft and beloved Ease. So also *Hosea 11. 9. Strangers have devoured his Strength* (saith he speaking of that wicked People) *and he knoweth it not; yea, grey Hairs are here and there upon him, yet he perceiveth it not*; that is, tho' they were exceedingly wasted already, and had all the Symptoms of an approaching Ruin upon them; yet they were so intent upon their Lusts, and so besotted by them, that they took no notice of it. And if Men will be so stupid, as to neglect their Danger, and never think of *re-treating*, till they have run themselves into the Jaws of it, what Remedy is there for

for them? How can they *escape*, that will sleep on *securely* upon the Brinks of a *Precipice*, and will not regard their Danger, till they are dropping *headlong* into it, and are fallen beyond *Prevention or Recovery*? But when once Men betake themselves to a Course of *serious Repentance*, they will soon recover out of this their *Lethargick* Temper. For Repentance will not only chase away all those *effeminate* Luils which barr'd their *Understanding* against all Apprehensions of Danger: and rendred them so *supine and regardless*; but it will make them deeply *sensible* of the Desert of their Sin, and what fearful Effects are to be expected from it: So that now they will be so far from thrusting *from* them the Thoughts of their Danger, that they will reckon it among the numberless Miracles of God's *Goodness*, that they are not long ago *swallowed up, and consumed* by it: And besides those *visible* Dangers that attend them in the *common* Course of Things, they will discern a *black Cloud* arising out of their own *GUILTS*, and gathering into Storms of *Vengeance*, and look upon their *past* Wickedness as the *dire Omens* of an *approaching* Judgment; and being thus awaken'd into a *Sence* of the Danger that threatens them, they are so far on their Way towards an happy *Recovery*.

2. True *Repentance* will also animate and encourage a People with the Hope of *Success* upon the Use of *due and proper* Means. It is the *natural* Property of a *wicked* Life to render Men *secure*, when Danger is at a *distance*; and *desperate*, when it is *near* at hand: When it is *remote*, they are afraid to mind it, lest it should *interrupt* their Pleasures, and mingle *Discords* with their *Harmony*; but when, by reason of their *Fear*, they are *forced* to mind it, the sudden *unexpected* Alarm it gives them, raises such an *Uproar* in their Thoughts, that they can neither *find*, nor *force* an Escape from it. For the *opposite* Affections of Human Nature succeed one another in the *same* Degree. Thus, when we *bate* those whom we *lov'd*, we usually *bate* them in the *same* degree that we *lov'd* them; and when two *contrary* Passions follow one another, they are generally both *extream*; and by how much the *Foregoer* exceeded the just *Medium* of one Way, by so much will the *Follower* exceed the other; just like the *Vibrations* of a *Pendulum*, the which the farther you swing it this way, the farther it will return the *other*; and consequently, the more we exceed in *Security*, whilst Danger is pursuing us, the more we shall exceed in *Fear*, when it hath overtaken us. So that, when out of an *extravagant* Indulgence to their *sinful* Pleasures, Men shut their Eyes against *approaching* Danger, and will not open them till it is just *upon* them, and flares them in the Face, the *ghastly* and *surprizing* Spectacle will presently transport them out of *one* Extream into *another*, out of a deep *Security* into a dead *Despair*; especially, considering how naturally the *Sence* of Danger awakens in *guilty* Minds their natural Dread of God, and fills them with fearful Expectations from *Him*: And when a Man awakes upon the Brinks of a *Precipice*, and all on a sudden sees an *apparent* Destruction before him, and by his Sight is at the same time roused into a *dismal* Apprehension of an Almighty Vengeance behind him, stretching forth its Arm to thrust him *headlong* down; how must it needs *appale*, and *astonish* him, and *disarm* him of all Hope and Power of *escaping*? So that out of a *secure* *Impenitence*, you see, there is but one Remove into an *heartless* Desperation: And when Men are *desperate* in the midst of Danger, and are reduced to their Wits end; when they have neither *Prudence* to forecast, nor *Courage* to execute any Method of Recovery, without a Miracle, their *Ruin* is unavoidable. Of this you have an eminent Example in the wicked *Israelites*, who when their Danger was *afar off*, were most unreasonably *secure* and *regardless* of it; but when *Sennacherib's* Army had *invested* their City, and they saw themselves *surrounded* with Ruin on every side, then their *Security* immediately converts into the most *frightful* and *horrid* Apprehensions: For so the Prophet describes it, *Isaiah* 33. 14. *The Sinners in Zion are afraid; Fearfulness hath surprized the Hypocrites: Who amongst us shall dwell with the devouring Fire? Who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting Burnings?* Whilst the Power of that haughty Monarch was at a *distance* from them, they

laughed at, and *despised* it ; but now it is at their *Doors*, they are so frightened at it, that they had no softer Words to express it by, than *devouring Fire* and *everlasting Burnings* : So that if God had not rescued them by a *Miracle*, their unmanly *Fears* had so disarmed them, that they would have never been able to defend themselves : But now by our *Repentance* we do most certainly prevent being reduced to this *woful Extremity* : For that will open our Eyes to all approaching *Dangers*, and remove those effeminate *Lusts* out of our way, which interrupted our *Prospect* of them ; so that we shall see them afar off, and having a free *Sight* and *Expectance* of them, shall not be *surprized* by them when they draw *nearer*, and are ready to fasten upon us : By which means we shall have *Time* to arm and fortify our selves against them, and to prepare to receive them with *Courage* and *Conduct*. And when they are come, our *Repentance* will also animate us with the Hopes of a timely *Relief* and *Succour* from above, and encourage us to hold out to the last *Extremity*, in *Expectance* of God's appearing in the *Mount*, and a timely *Interposure* between us and Ruin. For this being the *Condition* upon which God hath promised us his *Favour* and *Friendship*, there is no Reason why we should be *desperate*, so long as we live in the *Performance* of it. So that the Sence of our unfeigned *Repentance* will inspire us with a *joyful Hope* that God is for us : And what Danger can *dishearten* us under this glorious Hope that infinite Wisdom and Power is on our side ?

3. True *Repentance* doth also abolish those *mischievous Actions* which do naturally contribute to the Ruin of a People. How much a *wicked Course* of Life tends to a Nation's *Ruin*, is *notorious* enough to any Man that hath been an Observer of the *Effects* and *Consequences* of Human Actions ; how it *insatuates* their *Counsels*, *weakens* their *Courage*, *rends* their *Unity* and *Concord* ; how it *disorders* them in all their *natural Respects* and *Dependencies*, *consumes* their *Wealth*, and *prostitutes* their *Reputation* ; and how by all these *mischievous Effects* it gradually *wastes* and *consumes* them, and lays the Foundation of their inevitable *Ruin*. So that whilst *Vice* and *Wickedness* prevail in a Nation, 'tis like a lingering *Consumption* in our Bodies, that foots us into an Opinion that we are *well* and in *Health*, or flatters us with fair Hopes of *Recovery* ; but in the mean time is *undermining* the Fort of our *Life*, and *preying* upon our *Vitals*. But it is the most *wretched* piece of *Deceit* in the World, for a Nation to think it self *well*, while it is *wicked* : For so many *Vices* as it hath growing in it, so many *Diseases* it hath ingendering in its Bowels ; which, tho' it may struggle with a while by the natural Strength and Vigour of its *Constitution*, will by *degrees* inevitably weaken it, and without a *speedy* and *effectual* Purgation, finally *consume* and *destroy* it : And if it were the *best constituted* Nation in the World, it would be impossible for it not to *decay* and *languish* under the *malignant Influence* of an *Epidemical Wickedness*. That therefore which purges away this *corrupt Humour* out of which all *National Diseases* spring, must needs be the most *effectual* Means of a *dying Nation's Recovery* ; and that, and that only, is *Repentance* ; one *essential* Part whereof consists in putting off the Body of *Sin*, ceasing to do *Evil*, and denying all *Ungodliness* and *Worlaly Lusts*. And if once this bad *Cause* were removed, all the *mischievous Effects* of it would immediately cease, and thereupon the *sick* and *declining* Kingdom that groans and languishes under them, would immediately *mend*, and in a little time *recover* its native *Health* and *Vigour*. For what should hinder it from growing *well*, when the *malignant Cause* of all its *Distempers* is removed ? When that which *befools* its *Counsels*, *dissolves* its *Courage*, *disorders* its *Harmony*, *breaks* its *Unity*, *lavishes* out its *Wealth* and *Reputation*, is utterly abolish'd ? What should hinder it from growing up again into a *wise* and *valiant*, an *orderly* and *unanimous*, a *wealthy* and *renowned* Nation ?

4. And Lastly, True *Repentance* doth also put us upon such a *Course* of Action as doth naturally tend to the *Publick Good*. For *Repentance* doth not only consist in *ceasing* to do *Evil*, but in learning to do *Well* ; in putting on the new Man, as well as putting off the old ; that is, it is an *intire Submission* of our Souls to God, to do what he commands, as well as to *forbear* what he

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he forbids; and the *Matter* of his Commands is such as all of it tends to the *publick Good*: And if the several *Ranks* and *Orders* of Men whereof a *Nation* is composed, would but *unanimously* conspire in that *Course of Action* which God hath enjoined, it would doubtless, more contribute to the *Weal* and *Prosperity* of such a *Nation*, than the *wisest Counsels* or most *puissant Forces* without it. If those that sit at the *Helm* would but once resolve to steer by those excellent Rules of honest *Prudence*, impartial *Justice*, discreet *Mercy*, wise *Liberality*, advised *Constancy* and *Magnanimity*; it would doubtless, render their *Government*, far more *safe* and *easy*, more *useful*, and *prosperous*, than all the crafty *Tricks*, dark *Intreagues*, and wilily *Subterfuges* of wicked *Policy*; which instead of *promoting* the *Government*, do generally lead it into a perplexed *Maze*, and leave it there miserably *bewildred* and *intangled*. Again, If those that are *Subjects*, would but learn to govern themselves by those *Laws of Candour* and *Modesty*, of *Meekness* and *Fidelity*, of *Submission* and *Loyalty*, which God hath enjoined them; with what *Peace* and *Quiet*, *Safety* and *Contentment*, might they enjoy themselves under the *Shadow of Government*? In a word, If the *Rich* would be but as *courteous* and *charitable*, the *Poor* as *thankful* and *industrious*, and all as *just* and *honest*, as *kind* and *gentle*, as ready to *assist*, *forbear* and *forgive* one another, as God *requires*; what a most *glorious* and *happy Society* would there spring out of such a regular *Course of Action*? Doubtless, for *Peace* and *Contentment*, for *Bliss* and *Happiness*, next to *Heaven* it self, there is no *Place* comparable to a *vertuous Nation*: And were I in *Quest* of a *terrestrial Paradise*, I should sooner expect it in a barren *Wilderness*, inhabited with a *vertuous People*, than in the most fruitful and delicious *Canaan*, peopled with *wicked* and *degenerous Natives*. Since therefore a *vertuous Course of Action* hath so *direct* a *Tendency* to the *publick Good*, it hence necessarily follows, that *Repentance*, which is the *Entrance* and *Introduction* to it, must needs very much contribute to the *Safety* and *Recovery* of a *Nation*; because it puts the several *Parts* of it into *such a Course of Life* and *Conversation*, as mutually conduces to the *Peace*, and *Happiness*, and *Preservation* of the *Whole*: So that whether we consider the powerful *Influence* it hath upon *God*, or the good *Effect* it hath upon *us*; you see, 'tis a most *efficacious Instrument* of *publick Happiness* and *Salvation*. Wherefore if the *Consideration* of our own *private Interest*, and everlasting *Fate* in another *World* be not sufficient to move us to a serious *Repentance*, let us add to this, the *Consideration* of our *temporal Concerns*, which are involved in the *Fate* of the *Nation*. For the *publick Good* is a common *Bank* in which every *Member* hath a *share*; and consequently, whatsoever *Damage* that suffers, we must expect to bear *our Part* of it. And yet, God help us! If we impartially view the *Designs* and *Behaviour* of the *Generality*, we would hardly think that they did seriously believe there were any such thing as a *Common Weal* among us, every one almost endeavouring to advance his *own Interest*, tho' it be upon the *publick Ruin*; and all our *Pretences* to the *Publick*, being little else but a contracting of *Parties*, running a *Tilt* at one another; whilst the *Common Good* lies between them, and is equally trampled on by *both sides*. Wherefore, as we would not betray our *Common Interest*, and bury our selves in the *publick Ruin*, let us be persuaded to consider our *Ways*, before it be too late, and turn to the *Lord* by a deep and hearty *Repentance*. And to move you hereunto, I shall desire you to consider these few things.

1. What imminent *Danger* we are in.
2. How much we have *all* contributed to it.
3. How possible it is to *prevent* it by our timely *Repentance*.
4. How much our personal *Repentance* will avail us, though we should not *prevent* it.
5. How dearly we shall *repent*, when it is too late, if we do not endeavour the *Prevention* of it by *repenting now*.

1. Consider the imminent *Danger* we are in. For if we consider our *present* Circumstances, how many *visible* Causes there are conspiring to effect our Ruin; how we lie open to the *common* Adversary that doth so vigorously pursue our Destruction, and like an unwall'd *Vineyard*, are surrounded with *wild Boars*, and overrun with *little Foxes* within; which, tho' they are of different Kinds, agree in the same Ends, and concur to waste and to destroy: How, whilst these *little Foxes* are pulling down the *Vine* above, the *wild Boars* are waiting underneath to seize and to devour both; how the restless and indefatigable Malice of our *Romish* Adversaries without, is assisted with the furious Zeal of our hair-brain'd *Factions* within; who, tho' they cannot be insensible how much their Divisions *weaken* and *expose* us; yet seem resolved rather to venture all, than not to be *uppermost*; how our Counsels are puzzled and entangled, and our Procedures clogg'd and incumber'd; how our Choices are poised and suspended between contrary Evils, that seem so *equally* great, that we can hardly determine which is the *least*: In a Word, how our Mischiefs are chained and link'd to one another; so that we cannot remove *one*, without drawing on *another* in the room of it; and the Suspicion of *future*, makes us afraid of *present* Mischiefs: If, I say, we consider all these things, we cannot but be sensible, how *great* and *near* our Danger is, and how earnestly it calls upon us for a *speedy* and *effectual* Remedy.

And when we are encompass'd with so many Dangers on every Side, is it not prodigious Sottishness for us to stand gazing on them with our Hands in our Bosoms, making Speeches about them, and telling frightful Stories of them to one another; whilst, like a spreading *Gangreen*, they are growing upon us, and creeping insensibly to our Hearts whilst the proper Remedy of them is in our *own* Hands, and by a timely Application we may quickly *cure* and *prevent* them? When we see our selves upon the *Borders* of Ruin, is it a time to stand chattering at the *Wind*, spending our Breath in *fruitless* Complaints, *impotent* Invectives, and *factious* Murmurings? When it, instead of finding fault with our Superiours, arraigning the Government, and quarrelling at the *publick* Management and Conduct, we would at least, resolve to find fault with our *selves*, arraign our *own* Vices at the Bar of an *impartial* Conscience, and make a thorough *Inquisition* into the ill Conduct of our *own* Lives and Manners, we might *cure* the Evils, and *prevent* the Dangers which we talk and complain of to no purpose? Certainly, if ever Dangers called for a speedy Repentance, *ours* do: But if we will be deaf to their Cries, we desperately abandon our selves to the dismal and pitiful Desert of our own Folly and Madnefs.

2. Consider how much we have all contributed to the Dangers that are pressing upon us. I doubt, if we *impartially* survey our *selves*, and take a *severe* Account of our own Doings, there be very *few*, if *any*, that will be able to acquit *themselves* of having some hand in those publick *Mischiefs* that hang over us; that in all Particulars have behaved themselves so soberly and circumspectly, as to contribute nothing towards the filling up the *Kingdom's* *Iniquities*. Tho' many of *us* indeed, have not been carried away with the impetuous Current of open *Prophaness* and *Debauchery*; yet perhaps, we have suffered *our selves* to be born down with the contrary Stream of *Faction*, *Schism*, or demure *Hypocrisie*: By which we have not only *scandalized* our Religion, and *weaken'd* the Interest of it, imbroiled our Government, and disturbed the *Methods* of our *Happiness*; but also highly incensed the God of *Peace*, and *Truth*, and *Order*. And tho' *others* of us have neither been *prophane* nor *factious*; yet, it may be, we have been *remiss* and *lukewarm* in Religion, or extremely unfruitful under those rich *Manurings* and growing *Showers* which it continually affords us: By which we have mightily provoked our God to remove our *Candlestick*, and leave us in the dark; to cut us down, like *fruitless* Trees that are good for nothing, but only to burthen and cumber the Ground. And if one way or t'other

ther, we have contributed to those *Publick Calamities* that threaten us, we have no other Way to repair the Injury we have done our Countrey, but by our *timely* and *serious* Repentance; this is the only Balsam by which we can hope to heal those *Wounds* we have given her: And if when we have wounded, we refuse to cure her, tho' the Means are in our own hands, we are doubly guilty of her Blood, and shall be doubly charged with it, whenever an Inquisition is made for it. So that Repentance is a Debt we owe the Nation for the *Mischiefs* which our Sins have done to it; and which we can no otherwise repair, but by *repenting* of those Sins before it is too late; lest we leave such a Reckoning behind us, as will ruine the Kingdom, and undo succeeding Generations to discharge it.

3. Consider how possible it is yet to prevent our Danger by a *timely* Repentance. Tho' our Condition be full of Hazard, yet, God be praised, it is not altogether *desperate*: Tho' we are *inter pontem & fontem*, descending between the Bridge and River; yet there are a thousand Accidents may intervene, and catch us in our Fall, and set us saie on Shore again: And that Almighty Providence, which *orders* and *disposes* the *Issues* and *Events* of Things, hath infinite Ways which we foresee not, to change the confused Scene of our Affairs, and reduce our *Chaos* into Order. And how willing and ready he is to do it, is visible enough by his Long-suffering towards us, and his patient Indurance of our *Provocations*, in expectation that at length his *Goodness* may lead us to Repentance. How *careful* and *industrious* hath he been to discover Danger to us? To draw the Curtain from before the dark *Designs* of our *Enemies*, and to *unmask* their intended *Mischiefs*, in despite of all their Arts of Concealment? And considering thro' how many *Difficulties* the Providence of God hath pressed, in carrying on the happy *Discovery*, how strangely he hath forced it on, and scatter'd the *Clouds* before it, we have abundant Reason to acknowledge his *Readiness* to succour and relieve us, to prevent our being surpriz'd with an *unexpected* Ruin, and swallow'd up by it before we were *aware*. For what should his Aim be, in *shewing* us our Danger, but only to awake us to Repentance; that so by that *powerful* Motive, he might be induced to *rescue* and *deliver* us? Why should he *warn* us so long beforehand of the Blow that is falling upon us, but only to give us Space and Opportunity to *prevent* it by our *timely* Repentance? So that ever since the *Discovery* of our Danger, *Deliverance* hath been *waiting* upon us, expecting that happy Moment, when we would open the Door of our Repentance to it, and invite it in, and make it welcome. But hitherto, alas! we have shut the Door against it, and made it *wait* in vain: For several Months the willing *Child* hath been struggling for Birth in the Womb of *Providence*, and yet it is unborn; and still it struggles, but all in vain, for want of our Repentance to open the *Womb* to it, and *promote* its *Travail* to a happy *Birth*. And do we yet stand still as *Persons* unconcerned, when *ours*, our *Countrey's*, and our *Children's* Fate depends upon the Issue of it? When we may yet be safe, if by *abandoning* our *Wickedness*, we will but *assist* to our Deliverance, shall we stand looking on with our Hands in our Bosoms, and see it stifled in the *Womb*?

4. Consider how much our Personal Repentance will avail us, tho' we should *not* prevent our present Danger by it. For I know, it will be objected, To what purpose should we repent, if *others* still go on in their Wickedness? Can it be hoped, that our Personal Amendment should have such a mighty Influence, as to disperse that mighty Cloud of Judgments that hangs over the whole Nation? To which, in the first place, I answer, that perhaps it may. It may be, there is not yet a sufficient Number of *righteous Persons* among us to move the Holy God to be propitious to *this* Sinful Nation: And if for the sake of *Five* Righteous Persons God would have saved a *Sodom*; why may not you hope, that by adding your *selves* to the far greater Number of *righteous Persons* among us, you may yet prevail with God to save the whole *Nation*: And for the possible Hope of being *Saviours* to our *Native Countrey*, who would not make such a *cheap* and *easie* Experiment? But suppose, it should not produce this *happy* Effect; that notwithstanding our *personal* Repentance, the Cloud should break, and discharge a bloody Storm up-

on the Kingdom ; yet, I dare secure you, you shall never have Cause to *repent* of your *Repentance* : For God will either call you into his *Chambers*, shut his Door upon you, and hide you for a little Moment, till the Indignation is *overpast*, or he will turn it into such an *inestimable Blessing*, that you shall be sure to reap from it unspeakably more *Good* than *Prejudice* : And whilst *impenitent Wretches* shall be lashed at the same time both by God and their own *Consciences* ; whilst they shall be surrounded with *Darkness* and *Horror* on every Side, and not be able to discover any *Glimpse* of *Day*, either within, or without, or above them ; whilst *Heaven* and *Earth*, and their own *Consciences*, are storming together about their Ears, so that which way soever they turn themselves, they are *miserable* : Whilst God disowns them, their own *Consciences* reproach them, and the *World* will no longer help and succour them ; *Tou*, being reconciled by your *Repentance*, both to your God and your *Conscience*, will have a *safe Retreat* within your *own Bosoms*, whereinto you may retire, and be merry in spite of *Fortune* ; and being there entertained with the ravishing Sence of your *Father's Love*, with the soft *Harmonies* of a quiet *Conscience*, and the glorious *Hopes* of a *blessed Immortality* hereafter, you will not only be enabled to support your Share of the *publick Calamity* ; but also to *rejoyce* and triumph over it. So that would you be but persuaded to *repent*, I durst assure you, you shall find the Benefit of it, either in the Removal of the *Judgments* you fear, or in the Assistance it would give you to undergo them bravely.

5. And Lastly, Consider how *dearly* we shall *repent* when it is *too late*, if we do not endeavour to *prevent* our Danger, by *repenting now*, when we are groveling under those *dreadful Judgments* that hang lowering over us. When our *Religion*, *Liberties* and *Properties* are seized, and become a Prey to our insulting *Enemies* ; when our *Countrey* is spoiled or imbrew'd in Blood, by *intestine Broils*, or *Foreign Invasions*, and all is involv'd in Ruins and Confusions round about us ; then we shall remember with the Tears in our Eyes, that we had *once* an Opportunity to be happy ; that if we would have been contented to part with a few *base Lusts*, that did *unman* and *prostitute* our Natures, we might have been still a *blessed* and *prosperous* People ; that if we would have been so wise, as to have *sacrific'd* to God's approaching *Judgments*, our *Sensuality* and *Prophaness*, our *Faction*, *Oppression* and *Hypocrisie*, they would then have fairly retreated, and left us in the quiet Enjoyment of all our *spiritual* and *temporal Blessings* we enjoyed : Whereas now, being incensed and drawn on by our *desperate* Obstinacy, they have made a *dismal* Spoil of all, and left us nothing but our Sins and Guilts, to bear us company in our *Miseries*. When we shall see our desolate Countrey, that was heretofore the *Queen of Nations*, sitting like a *mournful Widow* in the Dust, with her Head *uncrowned*, her Garments *torn*, her Breast *wounded*, and all her Parts besmear'd with *Blood* : When we shall see our *Church* unpal'd, and all her *Fences* trodden down by *wild Beasts* ; her *Beauty* defaced, her Sun extinguished, or overcast with *Darkness* and *Confusion* ; how will it cut our Hearts to think, that all this is the best Product of our *own Follies*, and that if we would have been persuaded betime to abandon our Lusts, and listen to sober Counsels, all these *dismal* Ruins and Desolations might have easily been prevented.

O then we shall lament our Follies, and wring our woful Hands, and with a thousand and a thousand times, that we had been wiser before it was *too late* ! Seeing therefore it is not yet too late, let us for once *resolve* to make a tryal what good our *Repentance* can do to the *Publick* : And O, would to God we would once conspire to make this blessed Experiment ! And if upon our making it, a *Cure* doth not yet follow ; if we do not sensibly perceive our *Grievances* abate, our *Dangers* vanish, our *Enemies* weaken'd and dishearten'd, and our broken *Counsels* retrieved and united in the *Publick Good*, I will be contented to undergo *Cassandra's Fate*, never to be *believed* in my *Affirmations* more.

For this I am sure of, Repentance cannot fail of a *good Effect*; and that besides all the Good it would do us by its own *natural* and *necessary* Influence, it would reconcile *Him* to us, that hath the Disposal of our Fate, and then all would go well, and God, even our own God, would give us his Blessing.

Which He of his infinite Mercy grant: To whom with his Eternal Son and Spirit, be ascribed of Us and all the World, all Honour, and Glory, and Power, from this time forth and for evermore. Amen.

DISCOURSE III.

UPON

MATTHEW iii. 8.

Bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance.

THESE Words are a Part of *John Baptist's* Sermon to the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, of whom Mention is made in the foregoing Verse : The *first* of which being a sort of *demure* and *formal* Hypocrites, who under *religious* Pretences, shrouded the blackest Villainies ; the *second*, a Company of *Atheistical* Debauchees, who, to supersede the troublesome Obligations of their Consciences, and to obtain of themselves a free Dispensation to be wicked, denied the Existence of *Spirits* and the *Life to come*. The *Baptist*, upon their Address to be admitted to his *Baptism*, sharply reprehends them both, under one common Name, *O Generation of Vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the Wrath to come!* And then he goes on, *Bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*. As much as if he should have said, "O ye worst of Men, ye Brood of venomous *Miscreants!* I perceive by your coming hither, some body or other hath alarmed you with the *Forewarnings* of that dreadful Vengeance that is falling upon *this* Generation : And now to prevent it, you pretend *Repentance* of your Sins ; because you have heard, that I baptize with *Water* unto *Repentance*, you would needs assume this *outward* Badge of *Penitents*. But I know you well enough ; ye are a Pack of arrant *Knaves* and *Hypocrites* ; and howsoever at present you may be frightened into a demure Pretence of *Repentance*, I know, your Hearts are as wicked as ever ; and that you will not part with one of those *Lusts* which render you so *base* and *infamous*. And therefore for my part, till I have better Hopes of you, I am resolved, I will have nothing to do with you. This, I take to be the most *natural* and *genuine* Sense of the Words : And I know but one Objection of any weight, against it ; that whereas this Account makes *John Baptist* to have refused them his *Baptism* ; other Texts of Scripture seem to assert, that they themselves refused to be *baptized* of him ; and they did not come to him under a Pretence of *Repentance*, but upon a Design to *cavil* with him, and expose his *Baptism* to the People : For *Luke* 7. 30. it is said, that the *Pharisees* and *Lawyers* rejected the Counsel of God against themselves ; i. e. the Counsel which God, by *John the Baptist*, gave them, being not *baptized* of him : But what Counsel was it they rejected ? Was it the Counsel of being *Baptized* ? No such matter : For *John Baptist* never advised them to it ; but the Counsel he gave them, was to *repent*, and to *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*. And this they rejected ; for which they were not *baptized* of him. Not but that they would have been if they could : For it is expressly said in the Verse foregoing my Text, that they came to *John's* *Baptism* ; but *John* knowing their Hypocrisy, would by no means admit them to it, till they had first brought forth such *Fruits* as were *meet* and proper for *Repentance*. In handling of which Words, I shall endeavour these Three Things :

1. To shew what this *Repentance* is of which he exhorts them to bring forth the *meet Fruits*.
2. What the *meet Fruits* of this *Repentance* are.
3. The Necessity of bringing forth such *Fruits*.

1. What this *Repentance* is of which the *Baptist* here exhorts them to bring forth the *meet Fruits*? To which I answer, briefly, that by *Repentance*, we are to understand a sincere and thorough Change of Mind, which, as it hath been often observed, is the proper Signification of *μετάνοια*, which is the Word which the *New Testament* most commonly uses for *Repentance*. And then the *Mind* is *chang'd*, when the prevailing *Purpose* and *Resolution* of it is altered: When upon a due Consideration of the *Michiet*, *Indecency*, or *Inconvenience* of his *present Resolution*, a Man is effectually persuaded into a *contrary Purpose*, his *Mind*, we say, is *chang'd*; because he hath now a *contrary Judgment* of things, which form his *Will* into a *contrary Resolution*: And when once our *Mind* is thus *chang'd*, as to any *Design* or *Course of Action*, we are then said to *repent* of it. So that to *repent* of our *Sins*, is to be effectually *chang'd* and *alter'd* in our *Minds* concerning them; so as that, whereas before we did in our *practical Judgment* prefer them at least, *pro hic & nunc*, before our *Duty*, and in our *Will* embrace, and resolutely adhere to them; we do now, upon cool *Deliberation*, pronounce them to be the *worst of Evils*, and as such, do heartily purpose, and resolve to *forsake* them. And in this consists the *Nature* and *Essence* of *Repentance*, viz. in a *firm Resolution* to *forsake* our *Sins* upon *cool* and *deliberate Judgment*. Where by *Resolution*, I do not mean a mere *Logical Conclusion*, by way of *Inference* from *Premisses*, that such or such a thing is best and fittest to be done: For in this there is no *Choice*, the *Proceedings* of our *Reason* being as necessary, as those of our *Sense*; and where there is no *Choice*, there can be no *Vertue*. But the *Resolution* of *Repentance* is an *Act* of the *Will*, viz. its decretory and definitive Sentence for the actual Prosecution of such a *Course* as upon *calm Deliberation* is proposed as that which is most *fit* and *necessary*. For suppose, our *Reason* and *Sense* as two *Parties* pleading their respective *Causes* and *Interests*, the one for *Vertue*, and the other for *Vice*: And suppose, that in the *Conclusion*, either the *Matter* be left in *equilibrium* between them, or that *Reason* hath baffled *Sense*, and obtained a clear *Conviction* that the *Cause* of *Vertue* is infinitely *best* and most *preferable*, but that still the *Will* is in *suspence*, and hath not peremptorily decreed either one way or t'other; why hitherto all that hath been done, is but mere *Speculation*; there is nothing of *Choice* in it, nothing of *Vertue*, nor consequently of *Repentance*. But when upon a thorough hearing of both *Parties*, the *Will* interposes its *Sovereignty*, and pronounces Sentence on *Reason* and *Vertue's* side, this is my *final Resolution*; and this, by the *Grace* of *God*, I will stand to, I will from henceforth *submit* to my *Duty*, how difficult soever it be, and *discharge* those base mischievous *Lusts* of mine, what *Temptations* soever may assault me: When, I say, our *Will* with good *Advice*, and with a full *Consent*, hath pronounced this peremptory *Decree* and *Resolution*; our *Mind* is changed, and our *Repentance* actually commenc'd. Thus the *Prodigal Son*, for instance, while he was considering with himself the happy State he was fallen from, *How many hired Servants of my Father have Bread enough and to spare*; and the miserable Condition he was fallen into, *and I perish with Hunger*, was only in the *Porch* and *Entry* of *Repentance*; and had he staid there, and gone no farther, all this had been nothing but a dead *Speculation*, notwithstanding which he would have perish'd in his *Sin*. But when from hence he proceeded to that peremptory *Resolution*, *I will arise and go to my Father*, in that very Moment he became a sincere *Penitent*: And if in that Instant he had been struck dead before ever he had taken one Step towards his *Father*, he had died in a State of *Repentance*. For it is plain, his *Mind* was changed, he had put off the *old Man*, and put on the *new*; he had formed a new *Judgment*, and a new *Resolution*: And if he had immediately died, he had died in Subjection to *God*, and would have a-

rose and gone to his *Father*, as he did while he lived. So that the precise Notion of *Repentance*, you see, consists in the Change of our *Mind*; that is, of our *Judgment* and *Resolution*: And hence it is called, *being renewed in the Spirit of our Mind*, Ephes. 4. 23. and *being transformed by the renewing of our Mind*, Rom. 12. 2. Consonantly to which, *Hierocles*, tho' an *Heathen*, thus defines *Repentance*; ἡ δὲ μετάνοια αὐτὴ φιλοσοφίας ἀρχὴ γίνεται, &c. that is, *Repentance is the Beginning of Philosophy*; 'tis a *Renunciation* of *Evil Courses*, and a Preparation to a Life not to be repented of. So that when a Man hath repented, saith he, he neither quits *real* for *imaginary* Goods, nor chooses *Evil* for fear of *unfortunate* Accidents; but conforms his *Judgment*, and submits his *Will* to the divine *Canons*. And thus you see what that *Repentance* is, of which we are here bid to bring forth *meet Fruits*.

2. I proceed in the next place, to shew what those *Fruits* are which are *meet* for this *Repentance*: In general, they are such *Fruits*, or *Works*, as are natural and agreeable to such an *inward* Change of *Mind* and *Resolution*, as *Repentance* imports; or such as may give a plain Demonstration that you are *effectually* convinced in your *Judgment* of the Baseness and Malignity of your past *sinful* Courses, and *sincerely* resolved to *discard* and *renounce* them for the future. For the *Fruits* of *Repentance* are nothing but the proper Acts and Operations of it; and 'tis then, and then only, that we bring forth these *Fruits*, when the *Effects* of a *real Repentance* do appear in our *Life* and *Conversation*, and our *Actions* do signify that our *Judgment* *condemns* our *Faults*, and our *Will* *renounces* them. And according to this account, the *Fruits* of *Repentance* may be reduced to these following Particulars.

1. An *actual* and *thorough* Reformation.
2. A *profound* Humility and Self-Abasement.
3. A *great* and *tender* Modesty in our Expectation.
4. Candor and Gentleness towards others.
5. Simplicity and Integrity of Manners towards the *offended* Party.
6. Caution and Wariness for the future, not to *offend* again in the same, or the like Instances.

1. One necessary *Fruit* and *Effect* of our *Repentance*, is an *actual* and *thorough* Reformation. If those invisible *Springs* of Action, the *Judgment* and the *Will*, be changed and rectified, the *Wheels* of Affection and the *Hand* of Practice must necessarily move more regularly and orderly. For all our inferior Powers being subject to the Authority of the *Will*, and carried about with the Swing of this *Primum Mobile*, this first great *Orb* of the *Soul*, do naturally apply themselves to the Execution of whatsoever that decrees and resolves on: And to suppose a Man's *Judgment* and *Will* to be reformed, when his *Life* is not, is to suppose that he is not a voluntary Agent, but a piece of *Clock-work*; that he is not determined in his Motions by *Choice* and *Deliberation*, but by *Weights* and *Plummetts*, by necessary Pressures and Impulses: Which Supposal not only strips him out of all Capacity of *Repentance*; but also contradicts all *Experience*. For this we are as sensible of, as we are of our Hunger and Thirst; that while we are our selves, and can *deliberate* and *chuse*, we do nothing but what we *will*, nothing but what we *judge* to be good *pro hic* & *nunc*, and nothing but what we *chuse* upon so *judging*. So that for a Man to pretend to be a Penitent in Heart, whilst he is unreformed in his *Life*, is to *lye* against his own Experience. He knows, and feels, that what he doth, he doth voluntarily, with Approbation of *Judgment* and Consent of *Will*; and therefore if his *Actions* are bad, his *Judgment* and *Will* must be so too. You say you do heartily repent of your Sins; by which, if you understand what you say, you mean, you do absolutely condemn them in your *Judgment*, and peremptorily *disclaim* them in your *Will*; but still you must confess, you lead a *bad* Life, and *persist* in many of those *sinful* Courses of which, you hope, you have heartily repented: Which is as much as if you should say, I am fully resolved, I will

I will play the *Knave* no more; but yet I must confess, I do *lye* and *cheat* as much as ever: I am peremptorily determin'd to be very *temperate* and *chaste*; but I must acknowledge, I am very often drunk, and do very often whore: That is to say, you do what you won't do, you won't do what you do, your *Will* hath no Influence on your *Actions*, your *Actions* no relation to your *Will*, there is no Communication nor Intercourse between your Power of *chusing*, and your Power of *acting*: So that, as you cannot derive the Good that is in your *Will* to your *Practice*; so neither can you attribute the Evil that is in your *Practice* to your *Will*: All which is as false, and you know it is so, as any Contradiction in Nature. So that a thorough *Reformation* of Life, you see, is a necessary Fruit and Effect of *Repentance*; and you may as well suppose a *Sun* without Light, as *Repentance* without Amendment, if there be Time and Opportunity for it: For if a Man outlives the Change of his *Mind*, there is not a more necessary Connexion between his *Life* and his *Motion*, than there is between the Change of his *Mind*, and the Reformation of his *Manners*. And hence we find, that to *repent*, and turn from our evil Ways; to *repent*, and do our *first Works*; to *repent*, and be *converted*; to *repent*, and turn to God, are in Scripture very often put together, to denote the inseparable Connexion that there is between them.

2. Another necessary Fruit and Effect of our *Repentance* is a profound *Humility* and *Self-Abasement*: For between Pride and Repentance there is as direct an Opposition, as between any *Vice* and *Virtue* whatsoever. To repent of a Fault, is to be ashamed of it, to condemn and abhor ones self for it, to hate and renounce it as vile and abominable; and for a Man to do this, and at the same time to be highly opinionated of his own *Desert*, and plumed with glorious Conceits of himself, is impossible: Such a Sence of our own *Shame* and *Vileness* as is implied in a serious and hearty Repentance, can no more consist with a *haughty* Look, a *puffed* and *self-conceited* Mind, than Light with Darkness or excessive Heat with bitter Cold. And upon this Account the *Baptist* might well upbraid the *Pharisees*, who were a Sect of the most bloated Monsters that appeared in *human* Forms; and yet by offering themselves to his *Baptism* of *Repentance*, pretend to be true Penitents. O ye proud Wretches, do you pretend to Repentance? You that have swelled your selves with Self-conceit till ye are ready to burst again! You that are so full of your selves that you can never forbear overflowing with Self-applause and Vain-glory! That like a Company of Bladders, are blown up with your own Breath, and swell and look big, and yet have nothing but Wind in you! Go, bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance: let me see you grow more humble, mean and prostrate in your own Opinions; and when by this Effect I am satisfied that you are Penitents indeed, I will readily admit you to this my *Baptism* of *Repentance*. And, God knows, we have too many such *Pharisaical* Pretenders to Repentance, that under a dejected Look, a solemn Face, and whining Tone, do carry as *haughty* self-conceited Minds, as the proudest *Pharisees* of them all; that having been affected a little with the Sence of their Sins, and cast down with the frightful Apprehensions of God's Wrath and Displeasure, or that having suffered the Terrors of the Spleen, and acted through a few tragical Scenes of *Melancholy*, *Fancy* and *Passion*, are presently born aloft out of the Spirit of Bondage, as they call it, with such towering and magnificent Conceits of their own Sanctity and Goodness, as causes them to look down with Contempt upon ordinary Mortals, to despise their Superiors, and vilify their Betters, and separate themselves into Parties, that monopolize all Sanctity and Godliness to themselves; which, whatsoever these Men may think, is doubtless, a very dangerous Symptom of a rotten and diseased Repentance. For he that hath truly repented of his Sins, must necessarily have discover'd Cause enough in them to humble and abase himself in his own Eyes: And he that, after such a Prospect of his own *Baseness* and *Vileness*, as is necessary to Repentance, can upon the next Review, applaud and admire himself, and grow fond and conceited of his own Excellencies, hath a Judgment with two Ends like a *Prospective*, with which he can lessen or magnifie himself as oft as he pleases.

3. Another necessary Fruit of Repentance, is *Modesty*. He that is so *thoroughly* sensible of a Fault, as heartily to *repent* of it, will be thereby instructed to behave himself more *modestly* for the future. The Sence of his Fault will *cool* his Confidence, and render him more *bashful* and *moderate* in all his Pretensions and Expectations. Should I see a Company of *Rebels*, upon a Pretence of having *repented* of their *Disloyalty*, not only lay Claim to their Prince's *Mercy*, but presently fall foul upon his faithful *Adherents*, and call *themselves* his best and most loyal Subjects, and pretend to his greatest Favours and Rewards; I shall certainly suspect that they had *no Sence* of their Guilt; but that in their Hearts they were as very *Rebels* as ever. And thus, when upon pretence that having heartily *repented* of our *Rebellions* against God, we presently grow *bold* and *confident*, and begin to *crow* over those who were never involved in our Guilts, as a Company of *corrupt* and *moral* Wretches; when we are immediately *flushed* with triumphant Assurances of God's Love, and our *Loyalty* to him, and nothing will serve our Turns, but to be presently counted his *Darlings* and *Favourites*; it is a very ill sign, that we were never yet truly ashamed of our *Rebellions*; that whatever we pretend, our *Wills* are as stubborn and disloyal as ever. And this was the true *Genius* of the *Pharisees* whom the *Baptist* doth here so severely reprehend; who being a proud and conceited Generation, as I shewed you before, made no doubt but God valued them at the same rate as *they* valued *themselves*; and tho' in reality they were a Pack of as ill-condition'd *Knaves* as ever walked demurely under the Cloak of *Religion*, they were as *factious* and *turbulent*, as *covetous*, *gripping* and *oppressive*, as the *Devil* himself could make them; yet because, forsooth, they were *zealous* for their Party, and the Opinions of their Sect, and the little Modes and Affectations that distinguish'd them from other Men, they blew themselves up into as high a *Confidence* of God's Favour to them, as if they had been the most *Saintly* and *Godlike* Souls in the World; and did so wholly ingross and monopolize the Kindness of Heaven to *themselves*, that they would scarce allow the least Share of it to any of the *rest* of Mankind: Notwithstanding which, they pretended to be *Penitents*; and as such, it seems, would fain have been admitted to *John's Baptism*. But he considering how inconsistent their Humour was to their Pretence, bids them go bring forth *Fruits meet for Repentance*: As much as if he should have said, "You are a special sort of *Penitents* indeed! One would think by the Confidence of your Talk and Behaviour, you had no Sins to repent of: Why, you are the godly Party, the only *Favourites* of Heaven, and will allow none but your selves to pretend to the Smiles of God's Countenance. Go, for shame; if you would be accounted *Penitents*, behave your selves as such; learn to be more modest, to live as becomes Persons that are deeply affected with their Sins, and ashamed of their Guilts; and then perhaps, I may see Cause to admit you to my *Baptism*. And certainly, there is a very ill Sign, when after a few Pangs of Sorrow and Compunction, Men are presently perking up into *Confidence* and *Assurance*; when they will needs be at the Top of the *Ladder* before ever they have touched the lowermost *Rounds*; and be gaping for secret *Incomes* and *Manifestations* of God's Love, before they have manifested their Repentance by their Obedience to him. Sure, if they were but as sensible of their Guilt, as they ought to be, they would be contented to lie still a while with their Mouths in the Dust, and be satisfied that they are not desperate of being restored to God's Favour, but are admitted to hope well, that by God's Blessing on their *Endeavours* they shall at length arrive to such a State of *Goodness* as will intitle them to God's *Favour* and *eternal* Life. And such Modesty the *Sense* and *Shame* of their Guilt would teach them, if it were such as is necessary to an hearty and unfeigned Repentance.

4. Another necessary Fruit of Repentance, is *Candor* and *Gentleness* towards others. He that hath been so affected with the Sence of his *own* Faults, as heartily to *repent* of them, will not be very forward to censure and condemn the Faults of others: His Mind is so oppressed with the Load of his own Sins, that he is not at leisure to find Fault with other Men; or if he were, yet, deeply conscious, as he

he is, what *abundant* reason he hath to find Fault with *himself*, that gags and silences him. His *own* Sins fly in his Face while he is centuring *other* Mens; while he is pertly exposing his *Neighbour's* Fault, his *Conscience* twits him in the Teeth, and tells him, *the Devil rebukes Sin*: So that in his own Defence, he is forc'd to be *candid* and *favourable* to others; being conscious, should he severely reflect upon *their* Faults, he should thereby libel and upbraid his *own*. And indeed, 'tis a certain Sign that Men have little or no *Sense* of the Evil and Baseness of their *own* Sins, when they are so *forward* and *flippant* in animadverting upon *other* Mens. Should you hear a *deformed Wretch* exposing *another* Man for the *Blemishes* of his Nature, the *Disproportion* of his Parts, or the *Irregularity* of his Features, you would doubtless, conclude, that either he imagin'd himself to be very *handsome*, or design'd to make a *Satyr* on his *own* Ugliness. And so, when I hear Men that are great Sinners *themselves*, briskly declaiming against the Sins of *others*. I cannot but conclude, that either they conceit themselves to be Innocent, or have a mind to expose their *own* Guilt and Shame: But, to be sure, were they but as sensible of their *own* Shame, as they ought to be, that would restrain them from throwing Dirt upon *others*. And doubtless, it was upon this Consideration, among others, that the Baptist doth here so tartly upbraid the *Pharisees*; who, tho' they had rendred themselves by their malignant Tempers and Practices, the greatest *Pests* and *Mischiefs* of *Society*, the most direct *Antipodes* to the Nature of God, and the eternal Laws of *Righteousness*, were yet the severest *Censurers* of other Mens Actions in the World.

What tragical Clamours did they make against the *Publicans* and *Sinners*, for playing the Beast, while they themselves plaid the Devil? What *base* Interpretations did they make of the Holy and Innocent Freedoms of our Saviour; whom because he was not of their sour and unsociable Temper, they damned for a *Wine-bibber*, and a *Friend of Publicans and Sinners*? In a Word, Who was more forward than they, to emblazon the Faults of *other* Men, to fetch and carry scandalous Reports, and shake their Heads at the Iniquities of the Times, when, God knows, they *themselves* were the greatest *Plagues* and *Scandals* of the Age they liv'd in? And with this Rancour and Bitterness of Temper they would needs pretend to be *Penitents*: Upon which the Baptist bids them *bring forth* such *Fruits* as were proper for *Penitents*. As if he should have said, "One may easily discern what *goodly* Penitents you are, how deeply you are affected with your *own* Sins, by the Noise and Clamour you make against *other* Mens. You have Wickedness enough of your *own* to censure and make *Invectives* on; but while you should be looking inwards, your Eyes are in the Ends of the Earth, observing *other* Mens Faults and Miscarriages. Go, if you would appear to be Penitents, learn to be more *severe* upon your *selves*, and more *candid* to *other* Men; to make the worst of your *own* Faults, and the best of your *Neighbours*; and then I shall have reason to hope, that you are Penitents indeed. But 'tis fulsome Hyocrisie for Men to pretend to Repentance, whilst they are bitterly Censorious, and apt to judge hardly of *other* Men. And to Men of Understanding, there is nothing can be more *ridiculous*, than to see one that is just fallen off from a *lewd* and *dissolute* Course of Life, presently set up for a *Censor* of the Age; and with a wise and serious Forehead, animadverting upon the Freedoms, and declaiming against the Debaucheries of this or *other* Man: Which, whatsoever he may think, is a plain Demonstration that he hath never been duly affected with the Sense of his own Sin; and that he is only changing one kind of Wickedness for another. For were he but *thoroughly* convinced how bad he hath been himself, he would be ashamed to clamour, and inveigh against *other* Men; and the great Sence he would have of the Beam in his *own* Eye, would make him less apt to take notice of the Mote in his *Neighbours*.

5. Another necessary Fruit of Repentance, is, *Simplicity* of Heart, and *Integrity* of Manners towards the Party offended: For tho' 'tis a Maxim in *Policy*, not to trust a reconcil'd Enemy; yet could I be secure of the Sincerity of his Reconciliation, I should have more reason to trust him than a Constant Friend; because if he be thoroughly sensible that he hath *unjustly* offended me, and hath *heartily* repented

ted of it, 'tis reasonably to be suppos'd, that he will not only use me as a Friend for the future; but as a Friend whom he hath *injur'd* and unjustly *provok'd*; and consequently, that the Sense of the Injury he hath done me, will make him supererogate in Friendship; and by a Superabundance of good Offices, endeavour, not only to *discharge* what the Laws of *Friendship* exact; but also to expiate the unjust Provocations he hath given me. For the very Sense of a past Injury, when it is *heartily* repented of, doth naturally kindle into a *cordial* Affection towards him whom we have *injur'd*: And thus, if we have *heartily* repented of our Sins against God, the Sense of what is past, will render us more *sincere* and *cordial* to him for the future; and by how much the more we have *provoked* and *offended* him, by so much the more *studious* we shall be to *serve* and *obey* him. But if our *pretended Repentance* produces in us no other Effect, but an *outward Shew* of Obedience, and renders us more studious to *appear* good than *be* so; if it puts us upon *picking* and *choosing* our Duty, upon being zealous about *small* things, to compensate our Negligence and Remissness about *great*, it is an infallible Sign that it is merely *pretended*, and that all the Shews we make of *Reconciliation*, are nothing but mere *Vizards* and *Counterfeits*. And such was the Temper and Disposition of the *Pharisees*; they took care to *disguise* themselves in a pompous *Form* of Godliness, and to carry a very demure and sanctify'd *Outside*. Their *Looks* were solemn, austere and mortify'd; their *Tongues* all tip'd with the *Language* of Canaan; their *Motions* and *Gestures* were artificially compos'd to the *Tune* of an *humble* and *heavenly* Mind; they *fasted* thrice a Week, and *prayed* so long, that they made all the Streets ring again with their *loud* and *clamorous* Devotions, and gave *Alms* too now and then in a good *Eccho*, whence they might be sure to hear their Charities *resounded* after them in *Praises* and *Commendations*. They kept a mighty Noise about the *Fringes* and *Phylacteries*, the *external* Circumstances and Appendages of *Religion*; and were most zealous Asserters of *pure* Ordinances and *pure* Worship: But under all this Formality, our *Saviour* tells them, they were *whited Sepulchres*; who, though they look'd gloriously *without*, are full of Rottenness *within*. For this demure *Outside* of theirs was only a *Disguise*, under which they cheated and plaid the Knave more securely. Their *long* Prayers were nothing but specious Introductions to their *Rapines* and *Oppressions*. Their *Alms* were their *Decoys* which they sent forth on purpose to train *simple* and *well-meaning* People into their Nets. Their Zeal for the *Mint* and *Cummin* was the Varnish of their *Fraud* and *Injustice*. Their *long Fasts* for *Reformation*, were Stirrups to their *Ambition* of being uppermost; and their constant Refreshment after them, were *Widows* and *Orphans* Tears. In a Word, they could cheat in Saintly Language, play the Knaves with their Hands and Eyes lift up to Heaven; and while they seem'd to be as *Fervent* as *Angels* in their *Devotions*, they were as *False* and *Treacherous* as *Devils* in their *Dealings*. And yet these base People would needs have been admitted for *Penitents* to the Baptism of *John*; who considering the Inconsistency of their Temper with their Pretence, tartly upbraids them, and bids them *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*: That is, learn to be more *simple* and *sincere* in their Carriage towards their offended *God*, study more to *be* Penitents than to *appear* such: Contract your *Shew* into *Reality*; and let it appear by your *sincere* Respect to God, and Devotion to his Service, that you do *heartily* repent of your *Rebellions* against him. And certainly, there can be nothing more suspicious, than for a *young* Penitent to affect to make a great Shew of Religion: For *true* Repentance is naturally *bashful* and *modest*; it shuns the *Theater*, the *Tops* of Houses, the *Corners* of Streets, and is best pleas'd with *Silence* and *Retirement*; and provided *God* sees its Tears, and bears its Sighs and holy Purposes, it desires no other Spectator or Auditor. For the great Design of a Penitent, is to reconcile himself to *God*; and if he be but so sensible of his Sin, as *heartily* to repent of it; by how much the more he hath offended him for the time *past*, by so much the more he will study to please him for the time *to come*.

6. And Lastly, Another necessary Fruit of *Repentance*, is *Caution* and *Wariness* for the *future*, not to offend again in the same or the like Instances. For *Repentance* is a *penal* Duty, in which a Man undergoes some degree of the Smart and Punishment of his Fault; in which he endures the *Shame* and *Confusion* of a *guilty Mind*, the *Regrets* and *Remorses* of an *awaken'd Conscience*; and the *burnt Child*, we say, *will dread the Fire*. He that hath undergone the severe Discipline of a *deep Repentance*, will be sure to take warning by it, and be very *cautious* for the *future* not to approach those Sins for which he hath smarted so *severely*. And hence we find, that *Repentance* is not only express'd in Scripture by *μετάνοια*, which signifies a *Change* of Mind; but also by *μεταμέλεια*, which signifies an *After-Care*: Which shews, that tho' the *Essence* of *Repentance* consists in the *μετάνοια*, or *Change* of our Mind; yet *μεταμέλεια*, or an *After-Care* to avoid those Sins from which our Minds are changed and converted, is a necessary *Effect* and *Fruit* of *Repentance*; it being an usual Figure in Scripture to express *Causes* by their natural and easie *Effects*. And indeed, when I see Men boldly approaching and venturing towards those Vices of which they pretend to have *heartily repented*, I cannot but suspect that their *Repentance* is nothing but a *Pretence*; that 'twas only a *present* Pet and Distaste that they took against their Sin, upon some *ungrateful* Accident, or under a *sudden* Qualm of Conscience; and that it never proceeded so far as to a *cool* and *deliberate* *Change* of their Judgment and Resolution concerning it. For certainly, had they undergone those *Lashes* of Conscience, those *sharp* and *cutting* Reflections that are usually necessary to *prepare* the Way for such a *Change*, they could never be so fool-hardy, as to *play upon the Hole of the Asp* again, and to thrust their *Hands into the Den of the Cockatrice*, after they have been so *severely stung* by it: And the Remembrance of those *Agonies* of Soul, those *Spasms* and *Convulsions* of Conscience which their Sin hath *already* cost them, would make them *tremble* to think of it, and be instead of a *Sea-Mark*, to *forewarn* and *terrifie* them from approaching it again. But such was the Humour of the *Pharisees*, that tho' they *pretended* to be *Penitents*, yet when it serv'd their *Cause* and *Interest*, they were as bold and venturous at an *evil Action*, as ever. For so our *Saviour*, long after this *Reprehension* of the *Baptist*, and consequently, after this *Pretence* of *Repentance*, charges them with being as *intimate* and *familiar* with their *old Vices*, as ever. It was their Way indeed, and so it was always, to make their Religion a *Cloak* and *Pretence* for their *Wickedness*: But to serve their own *Faction*, which they call'd propagating the *Glory of God*, they esteem'd nothing unlawful. And tho' in any Point that was repugnant to the *Interest* of their *Seet*, they were the most *nice* and *scrupulous* People in the World; yet to serve their *Cause*, they could *lye* and *forswear* themselves, with the Help of a juggling *Reserve* or *Distinction*, as our *Saviour* observes of them, *Matth. 23. 16*. And, no doubt, but they could have taken *Oaths* and *Sacraments* too against their *Consciences*, to keep their Places in the *Sanhedrim*, and there carry on their *factious* and *turbulent* Designs. It being therefore evident by their being so *venturous* upon *sinful* Actions, that their *Pretence* to *Repentance* was *false*, the *Baptist* dismisses them with this *severe* Admonition, *Go, bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance: i. e.* Let me see you more *wary* and *cautious* of running into those *sinful Courses*, of which you now pretend to *repent*; and then I shall have some reason to *believe* that you are *Penitents* indeed. And certainly, while a Man affects to draw *near* to his *old Sins*, and to dwell in the *Neighbourhood* of them, while he delights in their *Remembrance*, and loves to *sport* and *entertain* himself with their phantastick Pleasures; while he affects to dwell within *View* of their *Temptations*, to venture to the very *Edge* and *Brink* of them, to the very utmost Limits of *Lawful* and *Innocent*; it is a very ill Sign that he never had that thorough Sense of their *Malignity* and *Danger* that is necessary to an *heartly* *Repentance*: For if he had, he would be afraid of all *Approaches* and *Tendencies* towards them, and be ready to *start* and *run away*, not only from the Sins *themselves*, but from their *Appearances* and *Resemblances*.

And thus I have endeavoured to give you an Account of the natural *Fruits* and *Effects* of true Repentance ; by considering of which, and impartially consulting our own *Experience* of our selves, we may easily determine, whether the *Repentance* we pretend to, if we pretend to any at all, be true or false. We live in an *Age* that doth so abound with all *Sorts* and *Degrees* of *Wickedness*, that a Man can hardly mention any kind of *Wickedness*, or *Party* of wicked Men, that are branded for either in *Sacred* or *Prophane* History ; but it is presently suspected, that his Design is to reproach and expose some *Party* or other among our selves. And I confess, if Men will set themselves to *guessing*, who is meant by the *Pharisees*, who by the *Sadducees*, they may find *Parallels* enough of both in this *degenerate* Age : And, God knows, they go together too often now in pursuance of worse *Designs*, than those *Sadducees* and *Pharisees* that came together to *John's Baptism*. But if any should ask me, who, or what *Party* of Men it is I reflect upon in these *severe* Representations I have made of *Pharisaical Pretenders* to Repentance, I can truly answer, that I intend no *one* *Party* of whatsoever Denomination ; there being among *all Parties*, a great many, that do not so much as pretend to Repentance ; and among most, as I verily hope, a great many that do more than pretend to it. But the *Pharisees* whom I mean, are those whom the *Baptist*, and after him our *Saviour* himself, do so smartly inveigh against : And if you please to consult *St. Matthew 23*. you will there find them treated with much more Severity, by the meekest and most charitable Person that ever was. But if in any *Party* among our selves, there be any such *Hypocrites* and false Pretenders to Repentance, as these *Pharisees* were, as I doubt, there are too many among *all Parties*, I must then ingenuously acknowledge, that I mean them too. And if any thing that hath been said, should reflect upon, and gall them, they ought to consider that that is their own Fault. They may avoid being *Hypocrites* ; but we must not avoid declaiming against *Hypocrisie* ; and whenever we do so, we must reflect upon them, whether we will or no. If Men will be *Hypocrites*, our *Saviour's Sermon*, as well as this, will upbraid and expose them ; and if it doth so, 'tis not his Fault, but theirs who made themselves obnoxious to his Satyrs and Invectives. The only way for you to avoid the Edge of such Reflections, is to become honest and sincere Penitents ; but if you will not, you must thank your selves, if it cuts and wounds you. For if our *Saviour* himself had stood this Day in this Place, and preached over his Sermon to the *Pharisees*, it would have been impossible for you not to have been touched and concerned at it ; and if you should be so desingenuous, as to fall foul on me, as they did on him, I will only propose *St. Paul's Quere* to you, *Am I therefore become your Enemy, because I tell you the Truth ?* And so I have done with the Second thing proposed, which was, to shew you, what are the proper *Fruits* and *Effects* of Repentance.

3. I now proceed to the *Third* and last Argument ; namely, to shew the indispensable Necessity of bringing forth these *Fruits* ; which I shall endeavour to make appear by these following Instances :

1. That we should bring forth these meet *Fruits* of Repentance, is necessary to the Satisfaction of God.

2. It is necessary to the Satisfaction of our own Consciences.

3. It is necessary to the Obligation of Repentance.

4. It is necessary to the Perfection of our Natures.

1. That we should bring forth these meet *Fruits* of Repentance, is necessary to the Satisfaction of God. For though it be wholly owing to *Christ's* Satisfaction, that lost Sinners are admitted to a Possibility of recovering themselves by the *After-game* of Repentance ; yet God, we see, hath declar'd, that without our Repentance he will not be satisfied. Neither indeed doth *Christ's* Satisfaction extend to final Impenitence ; it cancels none of our Guilts, but only those which we heartily repent of ; but as to all the rest, we are as accountable to the Tribunal of God, as if he had never died for us. So that all the Favour which the meritorious Satisfac-

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on of our *Saviour* hath obtained for us, is only this, that our Repentance shall be excepted instead of our *Punishment*; that is, that if we unfeignedly *repent* of our Sins, we shall thereupon be set as right in the sight of *God*, and in the Court of *Heaven*, as if we had undergone the *utmost* Rigour of the *Law*. So that now our Repentance being accepted of by *God* instead of our *Punishment*, it is necessary that it should be such a Repentance, as doth in some measure *answer* and *fulfil* the Ends of our *Punishment*. For since 'tis for *wise* and *good* Ends that *God* Punishes, it is not to be expected that he will accept of any thing in the stead of our *Punishment*, which doth not in some measure *fulfil* and *accomplish* those Ends; and this no Repentance can do, but that which produces the proper *Fruits* of *Repentance*. For the principal End of *Punishment*, is either to amend the *Criminal* himself, or to warn *others* not to imitate his *Sins* by the Example of his *Sufferings*; which Ends can never be effected by our Repentance, unless it produce in us the visible *Fruits* of *Amendment*. For suppose it possible that I should have *internally* repented, *i. e.* that my *Mind* should be really *chang'd*, that in my *Judgment* I should absolutely condemn my sinful Courses, and in my *Will* I should be peremptorily *resolved* against them, and no actual and visible Reformation should follow; if this, I say, were possible, it is plain, my Repentance would be wholly *ineffectual*, both as to my own Amendment and the Amendment of *others*. If indeed, I actually *avoided* the Sins I condemn, and am resolved against, my Repentance would effect the Ends of my *Punishment*; that is, it would make me a *better* Man; it would reform my Nature, rectify my Motions, and *extinguish* my bad Inclinations and corrupt Principles, and prove an effectual Means to reform *others* too; who by the good Example of my *Actions*, might be as effectually wrought upon, as by the *bad* Example of my *Sufferings*. And *God* having thus obtain'd his Ends by my Repentance, there is very good reason why he should dispense with my *Punishment*. But if after I have condemned my Sin, and *resolved* against it, neither my *self* nor other Men can be reform'd and amended by it; this Change of my *Mind* will have no Influence on my Nature; it will never correct its disorderly Affections, nor subdue its *wild* and *extravagant* Inclinations; but leave it altogether as *vicious* and *degenerate* as it found it. Neither will it have any good Influence upon *others*; because it doth not appear to them in any *visible* Effects. So that it is only by bringing forth its natural *Fruits*, that our Repentance or Change of Mind serves the Ends of *God's Punishments*; and 'tis unreasonable to expect, that *God* should accept of our Repentance for our *Punishment*, when it doth not at all serve the purpose of our *Punishment*. For this would be to defeat himself, to countertermine and baffle his own Intentions, and fondly to give up his *wise* and *good* Ends to the *Obstinacy* and *Perverseness* of his Creatures. You would fain have *God* dispense with your *Punishment*; well, but you ought to consider, that there are very *wise* and *good* Ends that he drives at in *Punishing* you. Would you have him give up these Ends? That is *unreasonable*; that is, to desire him to acknowledge, that his Ends are not *worth* aiming at. Why, what is to be done then? I will tell you what, you must give him his Ends by your Repentance; that is, by bringing forth *such* Fruits of Repentance, as will effectually amend *you*, and contribute to amend *others*; and then you may be secure, that *God* will be satisfied: But if not, be assur'd, he will prosecute his Ends by your *Punishment*, and take care to warn *others* by the *bad* Example of your *Sufferings*, since you would not take care to warn them by the good Example of your *Actions*.

2- That we should bring forth the meet *Fruits* of *Repentance*, is also necessary to the Satisfaction of our *Consciences*: For without such *Fruits*, a Man can never be rationally satisfied that his Repentance is *real* and *sincere*: For if we have made any Observation upon our selves, we cannot but be sensible of our own *Fickleness* and *Mutability*, how many *Sorts* of Men we are under our several *Circumstances*, how our *Mind* veers about upon every Change of Wind, and into what *contrary* Tempers it is moulded upon contrary Chances and Contingencies. And having such an abundant Experience of our own *Inconsistency*, how can we rationally conclude upon every *Variation* of Temper, That this, or that, is our fixt Judgment or our

standing Resolution ; that the Mind we are now in, will not Change upon the next Change of our *Circumstances* ; and that when *contrary* Accidents occur, we shall not take up *contrary* Resolutions ; especially, when our *Resolutions* do oppose our *Inclinations*, and our *Inclinations* are perpetually importuned and solicited by outward *Objects* and *Temptations* ; which is our Case in the matter of *Repentance*. In this Case for Men to conclude from the present Bent and Inclination of their *Wills*, that they are steadily *fixt* and determin'd to good Resolutions, is a piece of very unreasonable *Self-Assurance* : For when they know themselves to be so *fickle* and *inconstant* in matters to which their Inclinations are more *indifferent*, how much reason have they to suspect the Firmness of *those* Resolutions to which their Inclinations are so extremely *averse*, and from which so many outward *Objects* are continually beckoning and inviting them ? In this Case therefore, we have no other way to be rationally satisfied of the *Firmness* and *Stability* of the Change of our Mind, but only by the *Fruits* and *Effects* of it : For, if when it hath Opportunity, it doth not pass forth into *Action*, and display it self upon our Lives in an answerable *Practice* ; if it doth not ordinarily *restrain* us from those *Evils* it condemns and resolves against, and *spur* us *on* to those *good* Things it approves and consents to, it is most certain, it is a mere *Cheat* and *Imposture*. For let Men say what they please, it is *impossible* that any Man should live in those *vicious* Courses which they absolutely *condemn*, and are sincerely *resolved* against : They may now and then *quarrel* at their Sins, and take *Pet* against them upon some little Disappointment or unhandsome *Accident* ; and in the Heat of their *Distaste* they may *condemn* and *renounce* them ; but if when their Passion is allayed, they *resent* and *return* to them again, it is plain, that their *Minds* were never changed, and that the Current of their *Judgment* and *Will* was only interrupted by a contrary *Gust* ; but that it was never diverted into a contrary Channel. So that what our *Saviour* asserts of Men, is as true of their Repentance, *the Tree is known by its Fruits* : If our Repentance be *genuine*, it will bring forth the Fruit of *Reformation* ; but if it be *barren*, or bring forth nothing but Leaves, and good Words and Professions, it is certainly *Spurious* and *Hypocritical*. However therefore, Men may juggle with, and impose upon their *Consciences* with false *Shews* and *Semblances*, they can never hope to be rationally *satisfied* of the *Truth* of their Repentance, till the natural Fruits and Effects of it appear in their *Lives* and *Conversations*.

3. That we should bring forth these meet *Fruits* of Repentance, is also necessary to satisfy the *Obligation* of *Repentance* : For Repentance is not required of us merely for its *own* sake ; but in order to the *Fruits* and *Effects* of it ; and the Reason why God obliges us to this Change of our *Mind*, is because it is a necessary Introduction to a thorough Change and *Reformation* of our *Manners* : And for a Man to condemn Sin in his Judgment merely to *condemn* it, and resolve against it in his *Will* merely to *resolve* against it, is so far from being a *Vertue*, that it is a ridiculous *Impertinence*. And if we still practise what we *condemn*, and do what we *resolve* against, we are so far from answering the Obligation of Repentance, that we do but *inbase* and *aggravate* our *Impenitence*. For he that *doth* what he *condemns*, sins against his *Knowledge*, and flies in the Face of his own *Convictions* ; and he that *doth* what he *resolves* against, sins against his *Promise*, and basely *falsifies* his own Engagements. So that the mere Change of our *Mind*, you see, abstractedly consider'd, doth by no means answer the Obligation to *Repentance* ; because the Obligation doth not terminate in it *self*, but is made with respect to the *natural Effects* of such a Change ; and because this Change in it *self* is of no farther Use and Significance in *Religion*, than as it is pregnant with, and productive of those *Effects*. For either the Sin which I condemn in my *Judgment*, is such an *Evil* as I ought to *shun* and *avoid*, or it is not : If it be not, it is no Vertue in me to *condemn* that for an *Evil*, which I need not take care to avoid : If it be, it is a Folly to *condemn* it, unless I also *avoid* it. And so again, either the *Duty* I consent to, and resolve upon in my *Will*, is necessarily to be done, or it is not : If it be not, it is unnecessary for me to *resolve* to do it : If it be, it is in vain to *resolve* to do it, unless I perform my

my Resolution. For as a *Cypher*, which is only in order to a *Number*, signifies nothing, unless a *Number* be added to it; so Resolution, which is only in order to Action, is perfectly insignificant, unless it be seconded with Action. And since it is nothing but the Necessity of *doing* what we resolve, that can make it necessary for us to *resolve* to do it, we must either deny the Necessity, even of our *resolving* to amend, or acknowledge the Necessity of our actual *Amendment*. So that that inward Change of our *Mind* which *Repentance* imports, being required only in order to the outward Change of our *Manners*, it is impossible we should satisfy the Obligation of Repentance without bringing forth the *Fruits* of actual Amendment.

4. And Lastly; That we should bring forth these *meet Fruits* of Repentance, is also necessary to *accomplish* the great Work and Design of Repentance; which is to repair the *Decays* and *Ruins* of our Nature, and recover it from the *Diseases* it hath contracted by sinful Courses, to a State of Health and Perfection. For Repentances suppose a *Degeneracy* of our Nature; and the great Business and Design of it is to *raise* and *recover* us. And hence the *Prodigal's* Repentance is called, *Coming to himself*, Luke 15. 17. implying that before he was gone from himself; that he had abandoned his Reason, by which he was constituted a Man, forsaken the Guide and leading Principle of his Nature, and was degenerated either into a *Beast*, or a *Devil*; which is a very proper Description of the State of Sinners; who, when they depart from God, depart from *themselves*; and run out of *Humanity*, into *Bestiality* and *Devilishness*. For they do not govern themselves by Reason, as Men should do; but by their Passions and Appetites, as *Beasts* and *Devils* do; they turn a deaf Ear to the Voice of their *Reason* and *Conscience*, and constantly chuse and refuse what their own black Passions and Appetites direct them; and in the whole Course of their Lives do act like upright *Beasts*, or incarnate *Devils*. The proper Business therefore of Repentance, is to bring back these *Vagrants* to themselves, and restore them to their Wits and Reason; to rescue them out of the Hands of Passion and Appetite, and put them under the Power of Reason and Conscience; that so for the future they may live like themselves, and as becomes *rational Beings* that are related to God and one another. This is the proper Work of Repentance, which it can never effect, without it bring forth its natural *Fruits*. For he that so repents of his *evil* Courses, as not to correct and reform them, how is it possible he should ever be the better for them, when he moves not a step forward from the *corrupt* and *degenerate* State of his Nature; but only dances round in a Circle, and *sins* and *repents*, and *repents* and *sins*, and at last still returns to the same Point. The only Way to reform our Nature, and subject its Passions and Appetites to its Reason, is to live *well* and regulate our Actions by the Laws of Reason and Righteousness: By this we shall by degrees *tame* and *reduce* our irregular Inclinations, and re-advance our Reason to its native *Throne* and *Dominion*: By forcing our selves as we must do at first, to the Practice of *Vertue* and *Religion*, we shall by degrees acquire *vertuous Dispositions*, and those will improve into *vertuous Habits*, and those in the End will grow to Perfection. But if we only *condemn* our Sins, and *resolve* against them, but do not actually *renounce* and *forsake* them; instead of *bettering* our Nature, we shall more and more *debauch* and *deprave* it, and be still *declining* from bad to worse, and from worse to worse; till at last our Disease becomes *desperate* and *incurable*. So that it is indispensibly necessary, you see, that we should bring forth *Fruits meet for Repentance*; because, unless we do, it is impossible our Repentance should ever *accomplish* the Work it is designed for; that it should *heal* and *reform* our Nature, *extinguish* its *vicious* Inclinations, and *adorn* it with those *Graces* wherein its *Beauty* and *Perfection* consists: And we were every whit as good *not* to repent at *all*, as to repent so, as to be never the *better* for it. And now give me leave to conclude this Argument with a few Inferences.

1. From hence I infer, what a *ridiculous* thing it is for Men to make a Fond Pretence of Zeal for Religion, while the direct *Contraries* to all the natural *Fruits* of Repentance do most visibly appear in their *Lives* and *Conversations*. I confess, of all the Offices that belong to a Preacher, I am naturally most *averse* to that of Reprehension. I do not love to expose *Mens Faults*, and rake in their filthy *Dunghils*; and 'tis not only my *Charity* to *Mankind*; but also the Indisposition of my Nature, to find fault, that makes me so heartily wish, *O would to God that Men were once so good, as to need no Reprehension!* that so we might have nothing to do, but to *praise* and *encourage* them, to *excite* them to go on with the Comforts of Religion, and the just Applauses and *Encomiums* of their *Vertues*. But alas, we live in an Age that would make a Stone to speak, and force any Man of any *Conscience*, in despite of all the *Candor* and *Modesty* of his Nature, to cry aloud against the fulsome *Hypocrisies* and *Impostures* that look through our most glorious Pretences to Religion. For, for God's sake, Sirs, is it not a Shame, a burning Shame, to hear a Company of professed *Atheists*, and notorious *Knaves*, set up for Zealots and Reformers, and raise a Clamour for *Liberty of Conscience*, and *pure Ordinances*? As for the *sober* and *pious Dissenters*, I can bear their Mistakes with as much *Tenderness* and *Compassion*, as any Man; and can make them as large *Allowances* as I could reasonably desire for my *self*, if I were in their Condition. But when I see Men rank themselves under the *Banners* of Religion, that live in open *Hostility* to its Commands and Precepts, that make no Conscience of *blaspheming* the Name of God, traducing his *Vicegerents* and *Representatives*, defaming and defrauding their *Neighbours*, and exposing the most *Sacred* and *Serious* things to *Scorn* and *Derision*; I cannot but suspect, that there is Mischief behind the *Curtain*, what zealous *Appearances* soever they may make upon the Stage. For it can never enter into my Head, and I wonder how it should into any Bodies else, that those Men should ever design well to Religion, whose Principles and Practices are so openly *irreligious*. They may pretend Religion, (for that is so *venerable* a Name, that 'twill serve to set a *fair Colour* upon the ugliest Intentions;) but tho' we may be deceived by a well-disguised *Hypocrisie*, yet sure, we can never believe, that *Prophaness* is in earnest, when it pretends to be zealous for Religion, and a thorough Reformation. O would to God, that Men would at least be so honest, as to appear what they *are*, or at least, not be so *ridiculous*, as to pretend the quite *contrary* to what they *appear!* It would make an honest Heart bleed, to see how Religion, how the *Protestant* Religion is rendered cheap and vile, by the *impudent* Pretences which bad Men make to it; Men whose *Lives* are bad enough to disgrace Popery it self; and who are Protestants, only because they are not Papists. In the Name of God, Sirs, what have you to do with any Religion, and much more with the Protestant, which by its *pure* and *honest* Principles, defies and renounces you; which *abominates* your Designs and *disavows* your Actions, and *blushes* to see how you *Prophane* and *Scandalize* it, by pretending *Friendship* to, and *Familiarity* with it? For what will Strangers think of it, that understand not its Principles, when they hear such as you claim such an intimate Acquaintance with it? How prone will they be to suspect, that 'tis a Religion for your *Tooth*, and that it *shelters* and *patronizes* you in all your *Wickedness*? Wherefore, for God's sake, be at length so *just* to the Reputation of that Religion you pretend so much Zeal for, as either to bring forth the *Fruits* of it, by *living* up to its Principles, or not concern your selves any farther about it. For this I am sure of, while such as you pretend to it, it loses much more by the *Disgrace* which your *Lives* do cast upon it, than ever it is like to gain by your Zeal and your Clamour for it.

2. Hence I also infer, how extremely *insufficient* that Repentance is, which the Church of Rome doth frankly approve and allow of: Which is such, as plainly evacuates and supercedes the Necessity of bringing forth the *Natural Fruits* of Repentance: As any one may easily apprehend, that will but take the Pains impartially to consider the *Chain* of that Church's Principles. For first, the Council of Trent teaches, that *Attrition*, which is nothing but a Sorrow for Sin, proceeding

ing from the *Fear* of Punishments, doth dispose Men to receive *Grace* in the *Sacrament of Penance*; and that all *Sacraments of the Gospel*, of which *Penance* is one, do actually confer *Grace* upon those that are disposed for it. So that if he hath but the *Grace* to be afraid of *Hell*, and to be sorry that he is in *Danger* of it, it is but confessing his Sins to a Priest, and undergoing a short trifling *Penance*, and upon a few Words of *Absolution*, he shall presently be dubbed a true Penitent, and be as effectually intiated in the Favour of God as if he had brought forth all the *Fruits* of Repentance. And this, *Bellarimine* tells us, is the current Judgment of all their *Divines*; which if it be true, poor *Judas* had very ill Luck to be damned: For according to *this Doctrine*, he was thoroughly disposed for *Justification*, it being out of mere *Attrition* that he hanged himself: So that had he had but a Priest to have administered *Penance* and *Absolution* to him, that *Grace* that made him hang himself, would have intitled him to *Heaven*. 'Tis true indeed, they tell us, there is a certain *Penance* which Men must undergo for their Sins in *this Life*; and that if they should not perform what is imposed upon them, or if what is imposed, should not be sufficient to satisfy God's Justice, they must be forced to make it up by their Sufferings in *Purgatory*. But even against *this* too, that Church hath contrived an excellent Remedy; and that is, the *Treasury* of the superabundant *Merits* of *Christ* and the *Saints*; of which at very reasonable Rates, Men may purchase such a Share, as will immediately pay off all their *Purgatory* Scores, how great soever their present Sins, and how small soever their present Penances are. For out of this *Treasury of Merit* you may have *Indulgence* for a *Hundred*, a *Thousand*, or a *Hundred Thousand* Years; and if this will not satisfy, you may besides this, have full *Indulgence*, fuller *Indulgence* and fullest *Indulgence*; and 'tis impossible you should ever want *Merit* to keep your Soul out of *Purgatory*, if you have but *Money* and *Hearts* to pay for it. But if you should still be doubtful, you may secure all, if you please, by lifting your self in an holy *Confraternity*: For if you will but turn *Brother* of *St. Francis* his Cord, you shall presently be intitled to such a Stock of *Indulgencies*, as all the Sins you can commit, will never be able to out-spend. For at your first putting on this *sacred Implement*, you have as full and as effectual Pardon, as was ever vouchsafed in the *Sacrament of Baptism*. And afterwards, should you fall into mortal Sin, 'tis but taking so much Pains as to walk after the monthly Procession, and you shall have a plenary *Indulgence* which shall attend your holy Cord to the very Article of your Death. Besides which, you shall have your Share in all the superabundant *Merits* of the *Saints*, of the *Order* of *Saint Roses*, and *Saint Clara's*, and *Saint Francis* himself, who by preaching to *Beasts*, and teaching *Larks* and *Swallows* their *Catechism*, and silly *Sheep* to bleat out their *Canonical Hours*, with sundry other such like holy Feats, could not fail to treasure up a vast Stock of *Merits* in the common Bank of his *Fraternity*. Or, if you would be surer yet, you may enter your self a *Brother* of the holy *Fraternity* of the 150 Beads of *St. Dominick*; where, for saying over 150 *Ave Marias* and 15 *Pater Nosters* in a Week, you shall not only be allowed your *Dividend* of the superabundant *Merits* of all the *Saints* from *Adam*, and as many *Indulgencies* as you can possibly have occasion for your self; but such an Overplus as will be sufficient to redeem 115 Souls yearly out of *Purgatory*. And it would be a very hard Case if with all this Tackle you should go to *Purgatory* your self. But if the worst come to the worst, it is but in-rolling your self a *Brother* of *St. Simon's Scapular*, and then if you should go to *Purgatory*, the *Virgin Mary* hath engaged her self, if *Pope John XXII.* doth not foully bely her, to come down to *Purgatory* every *Saturday Night*, and pull up every Soul thence that hath worn this *sacred Vestment* into the holy Hill of eternal Life. And when a *Fryer's Cord*, or *Robet*, or *String of Beads*, are such excellent Tools for Men to work out their Salvation with, what need they trouble themselves to bring forth the *Fruits* of Repentance? Had these things been only the Conceits of some particular Members of that Church, I should not have mention'd them in this Place; because to us they cannot but look to be extremely ridiculous; but alas, they are Cheats that have been founded and establish'd on the Bulls of their Popes, avow'd and contended for by their gravest Doctors, and reverenc'd and

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believ'd by the *devoutest Members* of their *Communion*. And how can they be obliged to bring forth the Fruits of Repentance, who are furnished with so many pretty Devices to get to *Heaven* without them?

3. And Lastly, Hence therefore let us all be persuaded *heartily* to comply with this *Injunction*, and bring forth the natural *Fruits* of *Repentance*: First, to form a *heartly* and *deliberate Resolution* against our Sins; and then to put it into *Execution* by forsaking all *Ungodliness* and *worldly Lusts*, and living soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present World. I do not deny, but in this Undertaking there are many times very great *Difficulties*: especially, when we first enter upon it, when after a long *Course* of *Folly* we begin to reform: For then we must *wrestle* against our own Inclinations, and struggle with inveterate Habits; and this, perhaps, will put us to a greater Trial of our *Courage* and *Constancy*, than we are now aware of. But, if upon a due Consideration of the Arguments on both sides, we can but once persuade our selves to a thorough *Resolution* of *Amendment*, in all probability, we have broke the *Heart* of the *main Difficulty* of Repentance. It is, I confess, a *hard* thing for a Man to persuade himself against all his *Habits* and *Inclinations*, to resolve without any Reserve, in *Cold* and *Deliberate* Thoughts, upon a universal Reformation; at once to resolve to bid *adieu* for ever to all his *darling Lusts* and their appendant Pleasures. This, as our *Saviour* describes it, is like the *cutting off of a right Hand* and the *plucking out of a right Eye*; and therefore must doubtless be attended with vehement *Struglings* and *Reluctances*: But when this is done, the *sharpest Pang* of our Repentance is over; and if now we do not wilfully miscarry, these our bitter *Throws*, like the *Virgin Mother's*, will soon conclude in *Songs* and *Magnificats*. For by arming a *firm Resolution* against them, we have already broken the *main Strength* of our *Lusts*; so that now we have nothing to do, but to *pursue* our *Victory*: And if we have but *Courage* to keep the ground we have gotten, and to stand *firm* to our *Resolution*, that so our conquered *Foe* may not be able to rally and reinforce himself against us; we shall soon be crowned with the Joys of a *Victory* that will lead us into an *everlasting Triumph*. For our evil *Habits*, being for a while kept under a *constant* and *severe* Restraint, will by degrees decay and languish, and at last expire; and then the Trouble of contending will be over, and all our consequent Religion will be *Sweet*, and *Natural*, and *Easie*; and we shall reap far more Pleasure and Delight from it, than ever we did from the most jolly *Course* of Sinning. For besides that a Religious Life is in it self more agreeable to our *rational Faculties*, and consequently, more grateful unto *Human Nature*, whose *noblest Pleasures* do result from the Exercise of her *highest Faculties*, and whose *highest Faculties* are never so vigorously exercised, as within the Sphere of a Religious Life: Besides which, I say, we shall therein find an unspeakable Satisfaction of *Mind*, and such a Calm of *Conscience*, and such ravishing Joys and *Delights* springing out of our Sense of the *Love of God*, and our Hopes of a blessed *Immortality* hereafter, as will abundantly compensate all our *Labours* past, and render them not only tolerable, but *delightful*. For how can I think any Pains intolerable, the Endurance whereof will create a *constant Harmony* within me, will Crown me with the *Applause* of my own Mind, will indear me to the Fountain of all *Love* and *Goodness*, and entertain me with the Hopes of being as happy after a few Moments, as all the Joys of an *everlasting Heaven* can make me? But, I beseech you to consider, is it not much easier to endure the *Agonies* of a bitter Repentance, than the horrid *Despair* of a *damned Ghost*? To thwart a foolish and unreasonable *Lust*, than to roar forever upon the Rack of a self-condemning *Conscience*? If it be so grievous to us to contend with an evil *Habit*, and struggle a while with a stiff and obstinate Inclination, to resolve, and strive, and watch, and pray, against them; Lord, how grievous will it be to dwell with *everlasting Burnings*, and to endure the dire Effects of thy unquenchable Fury forever? And one of these must certainly be endured; for between them there is no *Medium*. Wherefore seeing we are under such an absolute Necessity of enduring *Hell*, or the *Difficulties* of Repentance, in the Name of God, let us but act like Men, and of the two, chuse that which is most tolerable; and then I am sure, we shall follow the Counsel of the Text, and bring forth *Fruits* meet for Repentance.

DISCOURSE IV.

UPON

MATTHEW xxv. 10. Last Part.

And the Door was shut.

THESE Words are the Close of the *Parable* of the *Ten Virgins*, whom our *Saviour* distributes into *Five Wise* and *Five Foolish*; and by them he represents the *different* Carriage and Fate of Men both *good* and *bad*. For the better understanding of which *Parable*, you must know, that our *Saviour* borrowed this, as well as sundry others, from the *Jewish Doctors*; of which, our learned *Sheringham*, in his Preface of his Translation of the *Toma*, hath given us sundry Instances; of which this is one; which to this purpose he transcribes out of the *Gemara Babylonica*; *Rab. Eliezer said, Be sure thou repent the day before thou diest.* Upon which his *Disciples* asked him whether a Man might know that Hour of his Death? Whereunto he answers, *Let a Man therefore repent every Day; because he knows not when he shall die.* Upon which *Rab. Jochanan* proposes this *Parable*: A certain rich Man prepared a *Marriage-Feast*, to which he called his *Servants*; but did not tell them the distinct time when his *Feast* should be: Of these *Servants* some were *wise*, and some *foolish*; the *Wise* cloathed themselves splendidly, and sitting before their Master's House, thus thought with themselves; all things are here prepared, and nothing is wanting: Wherefore since we are uncertain what Hour we shall be called, we will wait, that so whensoever he calls us, we may be ready to attend. But the *foolish* sleepy *Servants* loitered away their time, concluding thus with themselves; we need not be *over-hasty* in making ourselves ready, it being yet a great while before we are like to be called. But on a sudden the *Master* calls them all to the *Supper*; upon which the *Wise* appeared before him ready to attend; but the *Foolish* being *unready*, would fain have gone away to dress themselves; but the *King* rejoicing for those who were ready, and being very angry with those that *slept*, said, you who are ready shall sit down and eat, and Drink, and Rejoyce; whilst you that *slept*, shall be shut out of Door: For so saith the *Lord*; behold my *Servants* shall eat, but you shall hunger; my *Servants* shall drink, but you shall thirst. This is the *Jewish Parable*, which for Substance, being so exactly agreeable with our *Saviour's*, we may very reasonably conclude that his was only a *Copy* of that *Original*: And since the Design of it is evidently to shew the Danger of *delaying* Repentance to the last, we may fairly suppose the Design of our *Saviour* to be so too. For by the *Wise* and *Foolish* Virgins here, our *Saviour* plainly means *good* and *bad* Christians; and by the *Marriage Feast*, that State of *Happiness* which he hath prepared for the *good*. By their going forth to meet the *Bridegroom*, is meant, their Expectation of *Christ's* Coming, either to their particular, or to the general Judgment. By their *Lamps* in their Hands, *Expositors* generally understand, their *visible* Profession of *Christianity*. By the *Oil* that made those *Lamps* to shine, is meant *Charity* and good Works, which are the *Fruits* of a *sincere* Repentance, and the *Glory* and *Lustre* of our *Christian* Profession. And as for the *Wise*, who by *sincere* Repentance, had prepared themselves for this *Feast* of heavenly *Happiness*, they are admitted into it: But as for the *Foolish*, that had put off all to the last, though they bestir'd

themselves very vigorously in this *sad* Extremity ; yet all this was to no purpose : For when they came to ask Admittance into *Heaven*, the Door was shut against them, and they are dismissed with this bitter *Farewel*, *Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.* So that the Design of the *Words* is plainly to represent the *sad Calastrope* of a *late* Repentance ; which tho' it may be very active and vigorous when things are reduced to the *last* Extremity ; yet proves most commonly, ineffectual, and finds the *Door of Heaven* shut against it.

That therefore which I design from these Words, is this, to explain and state what is the Effect of a *Death Bed* Repentance ; by which I mean, such a *Repentance*, as after a long Course of *Wickedness*, begins upon the very near and sensible Approach, either of a *natural* or *violent* Death ; such as is put off till Death is at the Door, and Men perceive themselves to be departing hence, and going away into *Eternity*. For as for that Repentance which is begun in *Health*, when Death is not in View, and Men are in the midst of *Temptations* to the contrary, it is much more free and ingenuous than that of a *Death-Bed* can be supposed ; and consequently, though it should be stopped in its Progress by a *sudden* unexpected Death, yet there is much more Hope of it : And that which begins also in a *long lingering Sickness*, though it be not so free as the former, and therefore not so hopeful ; yet is there much more Hope of it, than of that which begins in more *acute* Diseases, to which Death more suddenly follows ; because it hath much more time to grow in, and to finish and compleat it self by. That *late* or *Death-Bed* Repentance therefore, concerning which we are now inquiring, must be such a Repentance as begins in the Prospect of a *near approaching* Death, and to which that Death doth very suddenly follow. Concerning which I shall enquire these three things :

1. How far it is possible for such a Repentance to be *effectual*.
2. How extremely *hazardous* it is whether it ever *actually* prove *effectual* to our *Happiness* or no.
3. If it should prove so, yet how impossible it is in an *ordinary* way for us to attain any comfortable *Affurance* of it.

1. How far it is possible for such a Repentance to be *effectual*. And here I dare not pronounce it to be *absolutely* and *universally* Ineffectual, though I confess, I am horribly afraid, that it very rarely proves otherwise. For the Repentance on which *Salvation* is entailed, necessarily includes a thorough *Change* of *Soul* ; that is, a *new* prevailing *Judgment* and *Resolution* : And for certain, wheresoever this really is, there is true *Repentance*. For the very Life of Repentance consists in the universal *Subjection* of our *Souls* to *God* ; and this Subjection consists in such a firm *Resolution* of *Soul* to obey him, as whensoever occasion is offered, will render us *actually obedient*. I know, there are some who place this Subjection of their *Souls* to *God*, in an universal *Habit* of *Obedience* ; but surely, they do not consider, that an *Habit* of *Obedience*, which consists in an *inherent* Aptness and Faculty of obeying, is not attainable under a long Progress in *Religion* ; and that in our first Entrance into the Religious State, we are so far from being *habituated* to obey *God*, that we generally obey with a great deal of Difficulty ; and while we do so, 'tis a Contradiction, to say, we are *habituated* to *Obedience*. So that by placing the *Soul's* Subjection to *God* in such a *Habit*, we undermine the Comfort of all *Beginners* in *Religion* ; and exclude all those from being faithful Servants, who have not conquered those *Difficulties* of obeying. And therefore I think it much more safe, to place our first Subjection to *God*, in a hearty Resolution of obeying : For as *Choice* and *Resolution* is the Principle of all our *voluntary* Actions ; so it is of our Subjection to *God* ; which being a *moral* Action, must be voluntary, and so begin in *Choice* or *Resolution* ; from whence, if it hath Opportunity, it will proceed into *Action* ; and that being often repeated, will gradually improve into an *Habit*, and so in time, render it natural and easie to us. But if Death should intervene, and deprive the Man who is thus sincerely

cerely resolved, on all Opportunities of *Actual* Obedience, that being accidental, makes no Change in his *main* State ; the *Frame* and *Temper* of his *Soul* remains the same ; it goes into *Eternity* a faithful Subject to God ; and had it continued longer here, would have expressed its Subjection in all the necessary Acts of *Homage* and *Obedience*. And far be it from us, to imagine the Condition of such a Soul to be desperate : For though it is true, that a *holy* Life is the indispensable Condition of *Salvation* ; yet it is also true, that a *holy* Life is necessarily included in this Subjection of our Souls to God. That Man doth live a *holy* Life who sincerely submits his *Soul* to God, and is firmly resolved, as Occasion offers, to express his *Submission* in all the *external* Acts of *Homage* and *Obedience*. 'Tis true, the *Death Bed* Penitent hath not Opportunity to exercise himself in all Parts of *Obedience* ; he cannot practise *Chastity* and *Temperance*, nor any other *Vertue*, to whose contrary *Vice* his *Sickness* hath utterly disabled him ; but what of that : Neither hath the *healthful* Penitent always Opportunity to practise every *Vertue* which God enjoins : If he be *poor* or *single*, he can no more give *Alms*, or provide for his *Children*, than the *sick* Man can be *Chaste* or *Temperate* ; and yet he lives a *holy* Life. I hope, though he hath no Occasion or Opportunity, to practise either of these Duties. Why then may not the *sick* Penitent that practises his *Duty* so far as he hath Opportunity ; that heartily mourns for his *Sin*, and patiently submits to God's Correction, that practises *Humility* and *Devotion*, is *charitable* in forgiving Offences, just in making *Restitution* for Injuries ; why may not such a one be as well said to live a *holy* Life, when he doth all this out of a hearty Subjection of his Soul to God, though he should have no Opportunity to practise some other *Vertues*. For he who is sincerely resolved to submit to the *Laws* of *Temperance* and *Chastity*, is chaste and temperate, though he never have Opportunity to practise them ; and all the difference between him and one that lives to practise what he resolves, is only this, that the *latter* will practise it, and the *former* would : And in God's Account, who sees the *Issues* of all our *Resolutions*, he is as really *temperate*, who would be so if he had Opportunity, as he who is so when he hath : So that though his Repentance be not strictly the same with the *others*, yet it being to the same purpose, we cannot imagine that the good God will damn him only for a *Punctilio*. If therefore it be impossible for any *Death-Bed* Penitent to reduce himself to a firm prevailing *Resolution* of obeying God, I see no reason to conclude his *Condition* to be *absolutely* desperate : For being so resolved, he is a *holy* Man, though very imperfectly, I confess ; if he go into *Eternity* with that *Resolution* with him, that will dispose him for some degree of *Happiness*. For if his *Resolution* be such as would have prevailed, if he continued in this *Life*, it will as well prevail in the *other*. And if it so prevail there, as to render him actually obedient ; it will by necessary Consequence render him in some measure a *happy* and *blessed* Spirit ; Obedience to God being as natural a Cause of *Happiness*, as the *Sun* is of *Light*, or the *Fire* of *Heat* and *Burning*. All the Difficulty therefore is this, not whether God will accept of such a *Resolution*, as whether a *Death-Bed* Repentance can be so far improved as to rise to such a *Resolution*. And here I must needs confess, and shall hereafter make it evident, that the Difficulty of perfecting such a Repentance into such a *Resolution*, is so exceeding great, that it is the greatest *Madness* in the World for any Man to promise himself Success before-hand whilst he is in *Health*, and hath so many better Opportunities of Repentance in his Hand. But, that is absolutely impossible, I dare not say, for these following Reasons :

1. Because *de facto* we sometimes find that the *Resolutions* of a *Sick Bed* have proved ineffectual. We know, there have been some Men, who in a Fit of Sickness, when they have looked on themselves as abandoned of all Hopes, have yet betaken themselves to serious *Resolutions* ; which, when they have recover'd to their Former Health, have visibly prov'd effectual. I confess, these *Sick Bed* *Resolutions* do most commonly die when the Man recovers ; and he usually leaves his *Bed* and his good Purposes together : But since there are some Instances wherein

themselves very vigorously in this *sad* Extremity ; yet all this was to no purpose : For when they came to ask Admittance into *Heaven*, the Door was shut against them, and they are dismissed with this bitter *Farewel*, *Verily, I say unto you, I know you not*. So that the Design of the *Words* is plainly to represent the *sad* *Catastrophe* of a *late* Repentance ; which tho' it may be very active and vigorous when things are reduced to the *last* Extremity ; yet proves most commonly, ineffectual, and finds the *Door of Heaven* shut against it.

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1. How far it is possible for such a Repentance to be *effectual*. And here I dare not pronounce it to be *absolutely* and *universally* *impossible*, though I confess, I am horribly afraid, that it is very rarely *practised*. For the Repentance on which *Salvation* is entailed, necessarily includes a *Change of Soul* ; that is, a *new prevailing Judgment and Affection*, which, wherever this really is, there *Salvation* is. For the *Change* which *Salvation* consists in the universal *Subjection* of the *Soul* to God, and this *Subjection* consists in such a firm *Resolution* of the *Soul*, that when the *Offer* of *Salvation* is offered, will render us *obedient*. I know, that many Men, who are in the *possession* of their *Souls* to God, in an *unusual* *Manner*, and *by* *Means*, do not consider, that an *Habit* of *Obedience*, which consists in a *firm* *Resolution* of *obeying*, is not attainable without a *Change of Religion* ; and that in our first Entrance into the *Religion*, we are liable from being *habituated* to obey God, that we generally are liable to a *Change of Religion* ; and while we do so, tis a *Contradiction* to say, that we are *obedient*. So that by placing the *Soul's Subjection* to God, in the *Resolution* of *obeying*, the Comfort of all *Beginners* in *Religion* is taken away, and they are left as *unfaithful Servants*, who have not conquered their *Enemies*. And therefore I think it much more safe, to place the *Soul's Subjection* to God, in a *heart-ty Resolution* of obeying : For as *Charity* is the *Principle* of all our *voluntary Actions* ; so it is of our *Subjection* to God : which being a *moral Action*, must be *voluntary*, and so begin in *Charity* ; from whence, if it hath Opportunity, it will proceed into *Love* ; and that being often repeated, will gradually improve into an *Habit*, and so be made *natural* and *easie* to us. But if Death should intervene, and deprive the Man who is thus *im-*
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1. Because *de facto* we sometimes find that the *Resolutions* of a *Sick Bed* have proved ineffectual. We know, there have been some Men, who in a Fit of Sickness, when they have looked on themselves as abandoned of all Hopes, have yet betaken themselves to serious *Resolutions* ; which, when they have recover'd to their Former Health, have visibly prov'd effectual. I confess, these Sick Bed *Resolutions* do most commonly die when the Man recovers ; and he usually leaves his *Bed* and his good Purposes together : But since there are some Instances wherein

they have held and proved effectual, that is sufficient to *demonstrate* the Possibility of the Thing : For what hath been, may be ; and what reason can be given why *some* Men may not perform in *Eternity*, what they promised on their *Death-Beds* ; as well as *others* do after their Recovery, what they promised on their *Sick Beds* ? As therefore the *Relapse* of most Men from their *Sick Bed*-Purposes proves it extreamly hard ; so the Continuance of others stedfast to them, proves it possible for such Purposes to be sincere.

2. Another thing that proves it possible, is this, that upon a *Death-Bed* oft times the *Arguments* of Repentance have a more immediate Access to the *Minds* of Men, than at any other time ; and consequently, may be well supposed to be much more effectual and operative. Now the *Promises* and *Threats* of Religion will strike more immediately on the *Soul* ; the *Goods* and *Evils* which they propose and denounce, being nearer at hand ; and the *Soul* perceiving her self within the *Moment* of enjoying the one, or suffering the other for ever ; and that thick Fog of *earthly* Cares and Pleasures that interrupted her Prospect into the *other* World, being in a great measure dispelled and scattered, she lies more open and uncover'd to the Things of *Eternity* : And therefore as one thing strikes upon another with a *natural Effect*, as *Light* strikes upon the *Eye*, and *Sounds* upon the *Ear* ; so *eternal* Things do upon *immortal* Spirits, when there is nothing between to intercept the Stroke, and make most deep and vigorous Impressions on them. And when *Heaven* and *Hell* are so near the *Soul*, that she expects almost every *Moment* to expire into the one or the other ; who can tell, what strange and sudden Alterations they may make in her *Temper* and *Resolutions* ? So that, though I must confess, it is a *stupendous Effect*, for a *Soul* to be changed in the short *Twinkling* of a *Death-Bed* Repentance ; yet, when I consider the mighty *Influence* which the *Arguments* of Religion may then be reasonably supposed to have upon her, I dare not say, 'tis *absolutely* impossible ; especially, considering,

3. And lastly, That how impossible soever it may be to *Human Power* ; yet 'tis not impossible to the *Grace* of God. 'Tis true indeed, God ordinarily vouchsafes his Grace to Men, proportionably to their Improvement of it ; and I confess, if he proceeds by this Rule with the *dying* Penitent, he hath less Reason to expect God's Grace now, than in any former *Period* of his Life. But yet we see the Grace of God doth not always proceed by *stated* Rules and Proportions : For sometimes God hath given the largest Measures of his Grace to those who have made the least Improvements of it ; sometimes very great Sinners have been stopt in their *wicked Courses*, when they least expected it, and turned back by a Grace that was almost *irresistible* ; and tho' this be more ordinary than other Miracles are ; so that Men may as reasonably *immure* themselves and depend upon God to feed them by Miracle, as put off their Repentance to the last, in expectation of having their Souls renewed and changed by such a miraculous Grace ; yet who knows, but when the poor *dying* Penitent, under the mighty *Hopes* and *Fears* of *Eternity*, is struggling might and main, for his Soul, to rescue it from *endless* Misery : Who knows, I say, but the good God may sometimes, and in some *peculiar Cases*, take pity upon him, and by a more than ordinary Grace, concur with his *Endeavours*, and render them successful. 'Tis I confess, a *sad State*, when things are brought to this Extremity, that he has nothing but *this* to depend on ; but yet since the Grace of God is not confined to do *thus* or *thus*, and no otherwise ; but may, when it pleases, transgress the ordinary *Methods* of its Procedure ; I dare not pronounce the State of those *Death-Bed* Penitents wholly *desperate*, who heartily implore the *divine Assistance*, and exert their utmost Strength, and use all means within their Power to *change* the *wicked Temper* of their Minds. For God may hear and pity them if he please ; and if he will, there is no doubt, but his own Grace *concurring* with their Endeavours, can produce this *happy Effect*, how great and difficult soever it may be. All that can be said therefore in the Case, is this, that no *internal Change* of Soul from a State of Disobedience, to a State of *universal* Subjection to God, is *indispensibly* necessary to Salvation ; that such a Change is possible to the *Death-Bed* Penitent, and so consequently, is the Salvation which depends

pend upon it. But alas, 'tis barely possible, *so* barely possible, that while I am in my Wits, I think, I should hardly venture on it for a *thousand* Worlds. Which brings me to

2. The next thing proposed ; which was, to shew you, how fearfully *hazardous* it is, whether a Man that begins his Religion on his *Death-Bed* can actually arrive to that degree of *Repentance* as is necessary to his *future* Happiness. And this will plainly appear, if we consider,

1. The great *Difficulty* of the thing it self.
2. The *Impotency* and *Indisposition* of him that is to perform it.
3. The *little* Reason he hath to expect an extraordinary *Aid* and *Assistance* from God.

1. It is extremely *hazardous*, because of the great *Difficulty* of the Thing it self. We find by Experience, that after a long Course of Sin, 'tis one of the most *difficult* Things in the World for a Man to reduce himself to a *thorough* Resolution of Amendment ; for Custom of sinning begets *sinful* Habits, and *sinful* Habits are a *second* Nature to us. So that for a Man to resolve upon a holy Life after he hath been long *habituated* to the contrary, is to resolve to make War with himself, and to Live in *open* Hostility with the *Inclinations* of his own Nature ; and thus to resolve against the *Grain*, and *incline* himself against his own Inclinations, is one of the greatest Acts of *Violence* that a Man can offer to himself. 'Tis true, in a sudden *Heat* and *Transport*, it is an easie matter for a Man to resolve against any thing when he is in a *Pet* against his *Sins*, or his Mind is *chased* into a *religious* Temper ; but, these *inconsiderate* Purposes are generally the greatest *Cheats* in the World : For they rarely, if ever, work any *Alteration* in the *Soul* ; for though now the Man be in a *Pet* against his *Sins*, yet his Judgment of them is the same, and that is the Principle of his standing *Resolutions*. Men are often *angry* with their best Friends, and while the Passion continues, they can easily resolve to discard them for ever ; but notwithstanding they do so, yet they are Friends still, and love them heartily, though at present they do not perceive it : And as soon as their Passion is over, their Love will return, and immediately *cancel* all their Resolutions against them. And so it is with those passionate Resolutions Men make against their Sins, which work no Change at all in the standing *Temper* and *Dispositions* of their Souls ; and are so far from curing them, that they are only the *Intermissions* of their Disease ; and though at present they are *angry* with their Sins, and do purpose never to be *reconciled* to them more, yet still they love them heartily, though they perceive it not, and as soon as their Passion is over, their Love returns and reverses this Purpose ; and so these Fallings out of Lovers end in the *Renovation* of Love : So that these *rash* and *hasty* Resolutions are so far from being *heartly* Submissions unto God, that they only make a *Truce* with him to fetch Breath, and *recruit* for a farther *Rebellion*. And thus to resolve, is, I confess, the easiest thing in the World ; but for an *old* Sinner to enter into a *serious* Resolution of Amendment in the midst of *cool* and *deliberate* Thoughts, when his Sins are about him entertaining him with *fresh* Remembrances of those *dear* Pleasures they were wont to invite him to ; when he is, or supposes himself to be *in*viron'd with Temptation, and importuned on every side with all those *soft* Allurements that are so sweet and grateful to him ; this, doubtless, is such a Task as will exact his utmost *Industry* and *Consideration*. For now he will meet with such *Oppositions* from his Appetites, such *Shrinkings* and *Recoilings* from his Will, such *Struglings* and *Pull-backs* from his *darling* Lusts, as will even distract his Soul, and interpose a thousand Impediments to hinder him from coming to a *thorough* Resolution. So that unless he be *armed* with great Consideration, *animated* with *invincible* Courage, and *aided* by a *mighty* Grace, after all his *Deliberation*, he will either not resolve at all, or, which is almost as bad, resolve with Reserves and Exceptions. Since therefore to form a *heartly* and *thorough* Resolution of Amendment, is so extremely hard and difficult ; what a *fearful* Hazard must that Man run, that remits it to a dying Hour ? For how can we
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hope to accomplish so *great* a Work in so *short* a Time ? When we *croud* up a Duty of so *vast* a Bulk, in so *narrow* a Room, in how much Danger must it be of being *strangled* in the Birth for want of Time and Air to *breathe* in ? I dare not say, it is absolutely impossible, in so short a Time to make a *thorough* Change in our Temper and Resolution ; but sure I am, it is so extremely difficult, that 'tis the greatest *Hazard* in the World whether we actually perform it, especially considering,

2. The great *Impotency* and *Indisposition* of *Death-Bed* Penitents to perform it. By what hath been said of the Difficulty of it, you plainly perceive, that to the Performance of it there is required *vast* Industry, *great* Consideration, and *earnest* Strivings and Contests, with our selves : But alas ! How unable and unfit is a Man for these things, when he lies languishing on a *Death Bed* ? When commonly the Sickness he languishes under, is either such as wholly *disables*, or extremely *weakens* and *impairs* his Reason : So that either he is wholly incapable of such Reflections and Considerations as are necessary to a *thorough* Resolution of Amendment, or at least, is very unfit for them. Now in this sad Extremity, what can the *poor* Wretch do ? His *sinful* Soul sits *drowzing* on the very *Brinks* of a dismal *Eternity*, and *Death's* cold Hand is thrusting it *headlong* down : So that if *She* doth not presently *rouze*, and *start* up, and *run* away from her Danger, within a very few *Moments* she will awake in *everlasting* Flames. But alas ! how should *she* *rouze* her self out of those *fatal* Slumbers, when she hath scarce Reason enough to reflect upon her Danger, or to take any Notice of that *fearful* Precipice before her ; when by the Distemper of her *bodily* Organs *She* is so *stunn'd* and *stupidified*, that she can neither discern where *She* is, nor whither *She* is going ? But suppose his Sickness be such as leaves him in a *free* Use of his Reason ; yet considering how much he must needs be distracted by *Pain* and *Uneasiness*, by *Weakness* and *Languishment*, by the *Cares* of settling his Affairs in *this* World, and the *frightful* Prospect that he hath of *another* ; it will be impossible for him, without a mighty Assistance from above, to *range* his *scatter'd* and *unweildy* Thoughts into such sober Reflections and *serious* Considerations, as are necessary to the *forming* of a *thorough* Resolution of Amendment : For such a Resolution can never be *formed* in a *Hurry* of Passion ; but must be the Result of *calm* and *composed* Deliberations. For as I shewed you before, hasty and passionate Resolutions work no *Change* upon the Soul ; and till a Man hath made a *new* Judgment of Things, it will be in vain for him to make any *new* Resolutions ; because 'tis impossible that any Resolution should be lasting, that is not founded in the Judgment. But what Capacity can a Man be in to make a *new* Judgment of things in the midst of the *incessant* Hurries and Distractions of a *Death-Bed*, when he cannot consider a quarter of an Hour together, but is interrupted almost every *Moment* by a thousand Accidents and Avocations ? So that to refer our Repentance to a *Death-Bed* is the same thing as to retire into a Battle to meditate, or to set up a *Closet* to study *Philosophy* in the *Head Quarters* of an Army ; where a Man is as capable of *free* and undisturb'd *Contemplations*, as Men usually are of *forming* thorough Resolutions of Amendment when they are dying ; which, without an extraordinary Assistance from God, being utterly impossible, must needs be extremely *hazardous* ; considering,

3. And Lastly, The little Reason such a Man hath to expect any *extraordinary* Assistance from God. When a Man hath slighted all God's *Invitations* to Repentance, and wilfully turned a *deaf* Ear to all the *secret* Whispers and Importunities of his *blessed* Spirit ; when he hath all his Life-time rejected the Motions and Tenders of his *Grace* upon this Resolution, that he would sin on as long as he was able ; and never repent, till he could sin no longer ; with what Confidence can he expect, that God should *vouchsafe* him in his dying Hour that *extraordinary* Grace which he stands in need of, and without which he must die *forever* ? For when a Man hath been mocking God all his *Life* with the Promises of a *future* Repentance ; but from time to time hath still delayed and deferred it, till he hath driven it to the *last* Extremity, so that now he must repent or be *damned*, perhaps the next *Moment* ; with what Face can he implore such an *extraordinary* Fa-
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your from that God with whom he hath so wretchedly prevaricated: For unless we suppose God to be a Being that loves to be provoked, one that is taken with *Affronts* and *Injuries*, and consequently, that measures his Favours to us by the Degrees and Number of our *Rebellions* against him; we cannot reasonably expect, that he should be then most kind to us, when we have offended him as much as we are able; and would never be persuaded to repent of our Wickedness, till we are able to offend him no more. I desire to have as large Apprehensions of the *Mercy* of God, as can be reasonably admitted; but withal, I am assured, he is the hardest to be imposed upon of any one in the World; and being so, it cannot well be expected, that when in despite of his Authority, and frequent Invitations to Repentance, the Sinner hath squandered away all his *Strength* and *Vigour* in a Course of Wickedness; God should be so indulgent to him on his *Death-Bed* as to supply that Strength which he hath spent in sinning against him, by the extraordinary Assistances of his own Grace; especially, considering how often he hath declared his Resolution of *dispensing* his Grace to us in greater or lesser Proportions, according to the Improvements we make of it. So *James 4. 6, 7, 8. For the Scripture offereth more Grace; and therefore saith, God resisteth the Proud, but giveth Grace to the Humble. Submit your selves therefore unto God; resist the Devil, and he will fly from you; draw near unto God, and he will draw near unto you.* And thus more expressly in the *Parable of the Talents, Mat. 25. 29. For unto every one that hath,* that is, improves what he hath, *shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, i. e. improves not what he hath, shall be taken away, even that which he hath.* God therefore having thus declared that he will *lessen* or *augment* his Grace proportionably, as we abuse or improve it; we may reasonably expect, that the oftner we do repulse its Motions, the weaker will be its Attempts upon us; and so weaker and weaker, till 'tis wholly withdrawn, and hath given us up for *desperate* and *irreclaimable*: And consequently, if God proceed in *this* Method, as doubtless, he most ordinarily doth, then the longer a Man continues in Sin, the more he is *abandoned* of the Grace of God. So that when the Sinner is arrived to his *Death-Bed*, he may reasonably expect, that if God's Assistance be not wholly withdrawn and lessened into nothing, as he may justly fear it will; yet it will be much less vigorous and powerful than in any *former Period* of his Life; and if it be, his Condition is next to desperate: For if his Soul be not *renewed* and *changed*, within a few Moments it is ruined beyond all Recovery. And since to effect this *Change*, is a Work of *mighty* Difficulty; what, but a *mighty* Grace, can enable the *dying* Penitent in so *short* a time, and with so *small* a Strength to perform it? So that the Sum of all is this; though the Condition of him that *remits* his Repentance to a *Death-Bed* be not absolutely *desperate*; yet 'tis so *hazardous*, that nothing on this side *Hell* can be more wretched and deplorable: And therefore for Men to put off their Repentance to the last, and venture their Souls upon so great an Uncertainty, is a piece of the most *desperate* Folly and Madness. I confess, when a Man hath been so desperate and cruel to himself, as to run himself upon this *fearful* Venture, I would by no means discourage his Repentance; but rather use all *Means* to invite and persuade him to it: For Repentance is always the best thing we can do; and when a Man hath been so desperately *besotted*, as to defer it to a *Death-Bed* and put himself upon this *woeful* Extremity, this is the *last* Remedy he can apply, and the *best* Refuge he hath to fly to. But so long as Men are well and in Health, and have a fair *Space* of Repentance in their hands, I would not for all the World encourage them to run such a *desperate* Hazard: For next to leaping headlong into *Hell* without any Repentance at all, doubtless, the most *desperate* Folly a Man can be guilty of, is, to defer his Repentance till he is dying. And so I pass on to

3. The Third and last thing proposed; which was, to shew you, that supposing our *Death-Bed* Penitent should repent effectually, yet how impossible it is for him in an *ordinary* way to attain any *comfortable* Assurance of it. And indeed, considering how many *Cheats* and *Frauds* there are under most of our Resolutions of Amend-

Amendment, it is at least, extreamly difficult for us to be any otherwise *secure* of them, than by their Effects and Performances. As for the *dying* Penitent therefore, that doth not long enough *survive* his Resolution, to see the Execution of it, how can he be secure that it is sincere and perfect; especially, considering that the *Circumstances* in which he makes it, are such, as do conspire to render it extreamly suspicious? For

1. He makes it under the *Fear of Death*.
2. In the *Absence* of Temptation.
3. Under a great *Agony* of Conscience.
4. In the *near* Neighbourhood of *Eternity*.

1. He makes his Resolution under a *mighty* Fear of Death, which gives him great reason to suspect it. We daily see, how much our Humours change and vary upon every Remove out of *one* Condition into *another*; and how these do cast the *Balance* of our *Superiour* Soul, and make us every day so many *several* sorts of Men. Every *Wind* almost turns our Mind towards a *new* Point; and, like Water, we take the Form of every *Vessel* we are put into. So that we have great reason to suspect, that our Death-Bed Repentance is not so much the *Mould* of our Minds, as of the *Condition* we are put into; and that were we poured back again into a *healthful* Condition, we should immediately lose our *present* Shape, and return into our *former* Figure again. For when Men see their Life is in God's Hand, and that he is ready to cut it in sunder; it is no Wonder at all, if they do what they can to *bribe* him to spare them a little longer; and consequently, if they resolve *well*, and make *fair* Promises of *future* Obedience; which is the best thing they can do in this Extremity. But if their Resolution be founded in the *Fear of Death*, its *Foundation* is contrary to its *Performance*; the Motive of their Resolution to live well for the *future*, being a Presumption that they shall live no longer: And it will be an Act of *Reason* and *Justice* to themselves, to stick to their Resolution, when the *Motive* of it is changed; and on the contrary, of *Imprudence* and *Unkindness*, to forsake the *Conclusion*, when the *Premises* are consulted. So that upon such grounds as these, what can be expected, but that this *sick* Resolver will resume his Sins with his Health, if he should recover, and leave his *new* Vows in that Bed where he first took them up, and discharge his *Fears* and his good *Actions*, his *Physician* and his *Confessor* together. It being so, how it is possible he should be assured that his Resolution is *sincere*, unless he recover and perform it?

2. He makes his Resolution in the Absence of Temptation; which gives him also great reason to suspect it. For now the *Seasons* of the Pleasures of Sin are over, he cannot *relish* their Delights, because his *cloyed* Appetite distastes them as the *full* Stomach doth the *Honey-comb*: And his Soul being now *uninterested* in all *sinful* Pleasure, and being naturally in continual Motion, must necessarily divert the *Current* of its Action some other way; and the *future* State to which it is so *nearly* allied, being all it hath to work upon, it is no wonder if the Freedom of its Motion turn *thitherwards*, being diverted out of its *old* Channel: For if he love his Sins or the *World*, never so well, he must leave them whether he will or no; if he dislike God, and his *Holiness*, and an *everlasting* Abode with him, never so much; he is forced upon them, or *dashed* upon *eternal* Misery, which it is impossible for him to chuse. So that now his good Resolution is scarce an *Act of Choice*: For tho' he would not chuse to obey God, if he could still *enjoy* his *former* Lusts, yet *they* being out of his reach, he must take what is to be had. So that 'tis mighty suspicious, that the Sence of his Resolution is no more than this; *Holiness* is good when a Man is just dying; but while he lives, and can enjoy his Lusts, they are a great deal better: So that the Approach of Death makes *Holiness* good to him upon this account only; because there would be some thing *worse*, and there can no longer be any thing *better*; and 'tis to be feared he esteems it *good*, only in comparison with *Hell*, which without it, will inevitably follow. And when it thus purchases the Reputation of being *good*, from the *near* Approach of such a *mighty* Evil, it is not so much

much esteem'd a *Good*, as a lesser *Evil*; which argues, that the Man's Judgment is not at all altered: For still he looks on *Holiness* as an *Evil*; and in chusing it before *Hell*, he only chuses of two *Evils*, the least, and 'tis extremely Suspicious, that he would no more have chosen it now, than he did while he was *Well* and in *Health*; but that it stands at present out of the Air of Temptation, and is presented to him without the *Counterpoize* of those sinful Delights, for whose sake he formerly rejected it. For there are many *Apprehensions* which make deep Impressions, not only on our *Brain* and *Fancies*, but on our *Affections* too, whilst these are calm and unprovoked; which Impressions notwithstanding, quickly vanish upon the starting of new Objects, and the Provocations of contrary Fancies and Affections by them: So that it is impossible to be certain, what those good Resolutions will come to, which a Man makes when he hath no Temptation to the contrary. The utmost therefore that can be said of them, is this, they may be sincere, and they may hold out; but there is an infinite Hazard in them: They are easily made; because at present there is no Temptation against them, no vicious Appetite strong enough to controul them; but there is vast Reason to fear, that should the Man recover, and his Appetites return again upon him, the next Temptation would betray him, and make him surrender up all his Resolution; and consequently, if he die before he hath made a Trial of himself, his Condition must needs be extremely uncertain, his Hope must sit upon the Brinks of Despair, and his Soul go trembling into Eternity, to think what a Hazard it is now a-running.

3. He resolves under the Horrors and Agonies of an awakened Conscience; and this also renders his Resolution extremely suspicious. And indeed that Man must be in a dead Sleep, that will not awake when Death is sounding the Trumpet of Judgment in his Ears, and calling him instantly away to give up his unprepared Accounts. For though when Judgment seems to us at the other End of Heaven, all is quiet; yet certainly, when Death brings us to the very Seat of it, the Awe of that dreadful Tribunal of which we are now in sight, and the Sense of so many Guilts staring us in the Face, of which we must the next Moment acquit our selves, or Die for ever, must necessarily shake our sleepy Consciences into unspeakable Horrors and Agonies, and make us infinitely Sollicitous to fly from the Wrath that is to come. And in this Distress, being conscious to himself, that the best thing he can do, is to resolve upon Amendment for the future; here he puts in for Sanctuary, having no other Hole to hide his guilty Head. So that now to resolve well, is hardly an Act of Choice; and 'tis much to be fear'd, that 'tis only an Expedient snatched up for the present Extremity; and though now he be very serious, yet that perhaps is only the Effect of a sudden Cast of Melancholy on his Thoughts; and if it be, when that removes, his Thoughts will be quite of another Colour; or if it be the Result of a more thorough Conviction, yet is it very probable, that may go off too when the Man's Circumstances are altered; that when the present Tragick Scene is removed out of sight, and the Alarm of his approaching Judgment sounds no longer in his Ears, he will presently let fall those Resolutions again, which he took up, only as a Shield, against his Conscience. And this being so uncertain, what a fearful Hazard must that Man run, that depends upon such Resolutions, and imbarks his Soul into Eternity in them? For tho' it is possible, they may be sincere; yet it is highly probable, that they are not; but as they were raised only by a Storm of Horror; so if that were laid, they would fall again; and if they should be False and Hypocritical, as God only knows whether they are or no, the poor Man is certainly lost and undone for ever.

4. And Lastly, He resolves in the near Neighbourhood of Eternity; which also renders his Resolution very suspicious. For the Soul is never more sensible of Eternity, than when 'tis walking on the Confinces of it: For the very loosing it from the Body wherein it dwells, and in which its Motions are all confined, doth many times give her some lesser Degree of those Advantages which free and naked Spirits have, that are not imprisoned in Flesh. For the less the Soul is found

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3. He resolves under the *Horrors* and *Agonies* of an awakened Conscience; and this also renders his Resolution extreamly suspicious. And indeed that Man must be in a *dead Sleep*, that will not awake when *Death* is sounding the *Trumpet* of Judgment in his Ears, and calling him instantly away to give up his *unprepared* Accounts. For though when Judgment seems to us at the other End of *Heaven*, all is quiet; yet certainly, when *Death* brings us to the very *Seat* of it, the *Awe* of that dreadful Tribunal of which we are now in sight, and the *Sense* of so many *GUILTS* staring us in the Face, of which we must the next *Moment* acquit our selves, or Die for ever, must necessarily shake our *sleepy* Consciences into *unspeakable* Horrors and Agonies, and make us infinitely Sollicitous to fly from the *Wrath* that is to come. And in this Distress, being conscious to himself, that the best thing he can do, is to resolve upon Amendment for the future; here he puts in for *Sanctuary*, having no other Hole to hide his guilty Head. So that now to resolve well, is hardly an *Act* of Choice; and 'tis much to be fear'd, that 'tis only an *Expedient* snatched up for the present Extremity; and though now he be very serious, yet that perhaps is only the Effect of a sudden Cast of *Melancholy* on his *Thoughts*; and if it be, when that removes, his *Thoughts* will be quite of another Colour; or if it be the *Result* of a more thorough Conviction, yet is it very probable, that may go off too when the Man's *Circumstances* are altered; that when the present *Tragick* Scene is removed out of sight, and the *Alarm* of his approaching Judgment sounds no longer in his Ears, he will presently let fall those Resolutions again, which he took up, only as a Shield, against his Conscience. And this being so uncertain, what a fearful *Hazard* must that Man run, that depends upon such Resolutions, and *imbarks* his Soul into *Eternity* in them? For tho' it is possible, they may be sincere; yet it is highly probable, that they are not; but as they were raised only by a Storm of Horror; so if that were laid, they would fall again; and if they should be *False* and *Hypocritical*, as God only knows whether they are or no, the poor Man is certainly lost and undone for ever.

4. And Lastly, He resolves in the near Neighbourhood of *Eternity*; which also renders his Resolution very suspicious. For the Soul is never more sensible of *Eternity*, than when 'tis walking on the *Confines* of it: For the very loosing it from the *Body* wherein it dwells, and in which its Motions are all confined, doth many times give her some lesser Degree of those Advantages which free and naked Spirits have, that are not imprisoned in *Flesh*. For the less the Soul is found

to work by the *Body*, the *higher* are its Operations ; all her *extraordinary* Motions are a kind of *Ravishment* from Sense. It is therefore very probable, that when the Soul is leaving the *Body*, it hath naturally a more *sensible* Touch and Feeling of its *eternal* State ; because the *nearer* any thing is to its *Residence*, the more *vehement* is its Motion *thither* ; and consequently, the *nearer* the Soul is to its *eternal* Abode, the more *quick* and *vigorous* may we reasonably suppose its Motions *thither* : So that when the *other* World is in view, and it is just upon the *Region* of *Spirits*, it is no wonder if the Sense of her approaching *everlasting* Fate, put her into great *Tremblings* and *Agonies*. For now there is nothing between *her* and *Eternity*, to *intercept* her Prospect of it ; no *sinful* Pleasures or Delights to *interrupt* her Thoughts of it, or deaden the Force of its Impressions : So that if in this State of Things she should not resolve to throw off her Sins, and embrace *Vertue*, when *she* is in View of that Hell of endless *Miseries* to which those tend, and of that Heaven of Joys to which this aspires, it would be prodigious. But whether this Resolution will hold when Heaven and Hell are *vanished* out of sight again, it is a *mighty* Hazard : And sadly probable it is, that if the Man recover from the *Brinks* of *Eternity*, and get farther off it, he will soon forget his *good* Resolutions, and leave all his Piety behind him. For when he resolved, alas, he was *sick* and *dying*, leaving this World, and launching into another ; but when he is well again, the Case will be altered ; *this* World will be present to him, and the other a great way off ; and when his Resolution is thus abandoned of the Motive that *animated* and held it together, there is infinite Reason to suspect, that it will immediately languish and expire. So that the Sum of all is this ; the *Death-Bed* Penitent may possibly repent sincerely ; but 'tis an infinite Hazard whether he will or no : And if he doth, it is *ordinarily* impossible for him to have any comfortable Assurance of it. I will not deny, but in some *rare* and *extraordinary* Cases, to serve some excellent End, God may immediately *suggest* Comfort to him, and give him Joy of his Repentance ; but whether ever he doth, or will do so, or no, is more than I am able to determine. For this I am sure of, he hath no where obliged himself to it ; and what he hath not promised, we have no reason to expect. For whatsoever is *extraordinary*, is more than what is promised ; but the *ordinary* Comforts of *dejected* Penitents are such as arise from an *inward* Sense of their own Sincerity, and of the *glorious* Hopes to which that intitles them. But as for the Sincerity of the *Death-Bed* Penitent, it is so indiscernable, by reason of *suspicious* Circumstances, that without an *immediate* Revelation, it is hardly possible to be perceived ; and from any Promise, that God hath made, there is not the least Encouragement to hope for any such *immediate* Revelation. So that if any such Comfort be *vouchsafed* to him, it is doubtless, very rarely ; because it is *extraordinary*. I know, there is nothing more common, than for Men that never repented till they came to *die*, to *die* very comfortably ; But alas, I am *horribly* afraid, that generally their *Comforts* are nothing but the *Effects* either of their Stupidity or their *Disease* ; or else the *Consequence* of very *false* and *dangerous* Principles.

First, Many times it is plainly the *Effect* of their *wretched* Stupidity and Sottishness. For some Men, we see, are so *Stupid* in their Sins, that nothing but *Hell-Flames* will awake them : And though when they feel themselves upon the Edge of *Eternity*, passing into an *irrecoverable* Condition, they cannot forbear reflecting on their Sins, and starting at the dangerous Consequence of them ; yet if they can but so far obtain of themselves, as to weep for, and resolve against them, they think that all is well again, and so go into *Eternity* with a great deal of Comfort and Assurance. But these are a sort of Stupid Souls that have no regard to themselves ; that are dying *forever*, but have not Sense enough to apprehend their Danger, or to feel the *Disease* of which they are dying : For if they had, they would never be so confident of their Recovery upon such *slight* and *easy* Applications ; they would consider, how *false* and *hypocritical* all their former Resolutions have proved, and how much Cause there is to suspect, lest *those* should prove as bad as *they*, and how impossible it is to impose upon God,

to

to whose *all-seeing* Eye the *inmost* Nature, and *utmost* Issues of Things are open and naked ; which would necessarily render them extremely jealous and solicitous concerning their eternal State. I am now going away into everlasting *Weal* or *Woe* ; Lord, what will become of me ! The only Security I have, that it will go well with me forever, is only this, that I am resolved upon a *future* Amendment ; but alas, I have *too* much reason to suspect my Resolution is *rotten* at the Core ; and if it be, Woe be to me that ever I was Born. This, without all doubt, would be his Language, if he were but thoroughly awakened into a Sence of his Danger ; which, because he is not, he dies in a *Dream* of *Happiness*, and will presently awake in real and intolerable Misery. And as this Comfort of the *Death-Bed* Penitent doth oftentimes arise from his *Stupidity*, so,

Secondly, Many times 'tis nothing else but the mere *Effect* of his Disease. For there are many Diseases that have a natural *Enthusiasm* attending them, *viz* such as *alternately* chill and freeze the *Blood*, and put the *Spirits* into unequal *Motions* ; and to such as these, *Dejections* and *Transports* do as naturally follow, as *Shiverings* and *Burnings* to an *Ague*. For when the *Blood* runs low, and the *Spirits* are weak and languid, then usually the *Scene* is all *Tragedy* ; *melancholy* Vapours *cloud* and *overwhelm* their Fancies, and they are lost in a Wood of *Spiritual* Descriptions. But when the *Tide* turns, and warmer *Blood* flows up into the *Brain*, and refreshes the *drooping* Fancy with *Brisk* and *Active* Spirits, when they are full of *Raptures* and *Extasies* ; which, because they look on as streaming from an *heavenly* Original, they labour to swell and heighten to the utmost Brink of their Capacities ; insomuch that sometimes they are stifled and overwhelmed with Joy ; and it is usual for them, especially in high *Fevers*, when their *Blood* is more briskly *fermented* by the Sharpness of their Humours, to chase and tickle themselves into real *Trances* and *Deliriums* ; which they, not understanding the *Structure* of their own *Bodies*, and the Nature of their Disease, do commonly mistake for the immediate *Sealings* and *Incomes* of the Spirit of God. So that if they chance to die in one of these *Transports*, those that are Spectators of their End, conclude that they depart in full Assurance, and are most infallibly received into the Joy of their Master : Whereas most commonly, I fear, their Joy expires with them, and leaves them desperate and miserable. But then,

Thirdly, In the third and last place, their Comfort is many times nothing else but the Effect and Consequence of their own *false* and *dangerous* Principles. They have entertained such Principles as these ; that their own *Personal* Righteousness is not at all necessary to render them acceptable to God ; and that all is required of them, is, to rest and rely upon *Jesus Christ* ; which if they do, all their *Defects* and *Miscarriages* shall be most certainly covered with the *Robe* of his Righteousness ; and God will look upon them, and deal with them, as if they had been as righteous as he. That Men have imbib'd such Principles as these, and learned to practise on them, we, who converse with Sick-Beds cannot be ignorant : For when they have gone on impenitently to their *Death-Beds*, and we come to inquire into the Grounds of their Hopes ; this we find, is the *ordinary* Refuge they fly to, that *Jesus Christ* hath obeyed and suffered for them ; and therefore they firmly rely upon him, and fling their Souls into his Arms, and make no doubt, but he will catch them, and save them from the Wrath to come : As if the Design of our *Saviour's* Undertaking had been to privilege those who believe in him, to Live wickedly and Die comfortably. That he, by his *Merit* and *Satisfaction*, hath obtained this Grant of his Father, that all who heartily submit themselves unto him, shall be received into his Favour, notwithstanding their past *Rebellions* and present *Imperfections* of Obedience, I think an undoubted Principle of *Christianity* : But that he hath obtained this Favour for us *absolutely*, whether we submit to his Father, or no, is so far from being *Christian*, that I think, 'tis one of the most *Antichristian* Doctrines that was ever set on broach in the World : For it plainly defeats the main Design of *Christianity*, and totally dissolves all its Obligations. For whereas the principal Drift of *Christianity* is to teach Men to deny *Ungodliness* and *Worldly Lusts*, and to Live *soberly*, *righteously* and *godly* in this

present World; *this Doctrine unteaches* all again, and gives Men a Dispensation to live as wickedly as they please. For if upon my *Reliance* upon Christ, I shall be received into God's Favour whether I submit to him or no, farewell to all Obligations of Obedience. What need Men be Sollicitous of making such hearty *Submissions* of their *Souls* to God, if the *Saviour* be a *Sanctuary* from the Authority of his Laws? So that for Men to rely confidently upon *Christ*, before they are secure that their *Souls* are heartily subjected to him, is a piece of the greatest Arrogance and Presumption: And tho' they may pacify their Conscience with it when they are dying; yet when they are dead, they will find they have made more bold than welcome with their *Saviour*; that he will not be a *Patron* to their Sins, nor side with them so far in their *Rebellions* against his Father, as to shelter them in his *Wounds*, from the due *Vengeance* of eternal Fire. Altho' therefore these *Death-Bed* Penitents do too often die very comfortably; yet considering what *false* Grounds their Comforts generally stand on, I had much rather see them go down to their *Graves* in the greatest *Sorrow* and *Anxiety* of Soul: For if they should miscarry, as there is vast reason to fear they will, it grieves my Soul to think what a *Surprize* they will be in; how they will be *blanked* and *amazed*, when, contrary to their bold Presumptions of waking in *immortal* Joys, they find themselves among *Devils* and *damned Ghosts*, abandoned to *endless Misery* and *Despair*. And indeed, I cannot but wonder, that a Man who hath deferred his Repentance to a *Death-Bed*, should have the Confidence to talk of Comfort and Assurance; which is such a Reward as God usually appropriates to *long* and most *eminent* Piety. But for a Man that hath rebelled against God all his Days, to perk up presently after a few Sighs and Submissions, and pretend to as much Assurance of his *Saviour*, as if he had been his *ancient* Friend and Familiar, is *downright* inexcusable Impudence. Alas poor Man! What less canst thou do in Modesty, than spend the *small* Remainder of thy Days in *Sighs*, and *Tears*, and deep *Humiliations*; and when thou hast done thy utmost, to content thy self with this, thou art not altogether desperate? But as for Comfort and Assurance, it would well become thee to leave them to those who have better deserved them: For after all thou canst do, if thou gettest to *Heaven*, it will be a Wonder of Mercy: So that unless thou art absolutely besotted, thou must die in great Fear, and go trembling away into *Eternity*. So miserable is the State of the *Death-Bed* Penitent, that it is a mighty Hazard whether ever he repent to purpose; and if he doth, it is ordinarily impossible to reap any comfortable Assurance of it.

And now I expect, that it will be objected against this Discourse, that it favours of too much Rigour and Severity; because it represents the State of *dying* Penitents so very *near* to desperate. To which I briefly answer, that if it were absolutely desperate, as I confess, I think it very near so, yet doubtless, the best way is to represent Things as they are: For the nature of the Thing is already fixed, and neither your Opinion nor mine, will alter it. Indeed, if I could recover a *dying* Man, by telling him that he is not dying, it would be Cruelty in me to pronounce him past Recovery: And so, could I save the *dying* Penitent, by telling him that he is secure, I was very much to blame, should I say, his Case is desperate. But alas! if it be so, it will be so, let me say what I please: So that in pronouncing that it is so, I only make him sensible of it a few *Moments* sooner. I do but shew him what he must trust to, and what he will presently be convinced of by *woful* Experience; and by ringing out a *Passing-Bell* to his *departing* Soul, I do him this Kindness at least, that he will not be in *Hell* before he is aware of it.

And certainly, this is some Charity, tho' it be severe: But yet neither do I represent the Case to be altogether desperate; tho', I must confess, some very great and eminent Divines have done so: For I have endeavour'd to shew, that *true* Repentance is not *impossible* on a *Death-Bed*, tho' extremely *hazardous* and *difficult*: So that still there is *some Hope*, enough to encourage the Sinner's *utmost* Endeavour, and keep his Head *above* Water; and for him to give up himself to Despair, while

while there is any glimmering Hope, is, to enter into *He'll* before his time ; which is a Degree of Imprudence next to *that* he hath been already guilty of, in putting himself upon this dismal Extremity. But supposing it had been *represented* as wholly desperate ; yet this can occasion no Man that hears me, to despair ; unless it be thro' his own *Default*. For, God be praised, I am not now preaching to a sick or dying *Auditory* : You are now well, and in Health, and have a Space and Season of Repentance before you ; which, if you will but diligently improve, you prevent the fearful Hazard whereunto a *Death-Bed* Penitence exposes you. But if thro' your own Neglect, you should fall into it, and despair in it, who can you blame, but your selves, for it ? All that I aim at, is, to prevent your Danger, by persuading you to *repent betime* : But if you will be so cruel to your selves, as to delay it till it is *too late*, and then *Despair* overtake you you may thank your selves for it, that would take no Warning. And therefore to render this *Argument* yet more effectual, I intend to represent to you the *Folly* and *Wickedness* of deterring our Repentance to the *last*, and thereby to excite and provoke you to a *speedy* Resolution of *Amendment* ; that so when the *Bridegroom* comes, you may not with *these foolish Virgins* in my *Text*, find the *Door of Heaven* shut against you ; but that having finish'd your Work, you may be *admitted* with *that good and profitable Servant*, into the Joy of your Master.

DIS-

DISCOURSE V.

UPON

REVELATIONS ii. 21.

I gave her Space to repent of her Fornication, and she repented not.

THE Person here spoken of, is *Jesabel*, as you may see in the foregoing Verse : But who this *Jesabel* was, is very much disputed by *Expositors*. *Epiphanius*, and some that follow him, refer this Title to those Women Hereticks, *Priscilla*, *Maximilla*, and *Quintilla*, who followed *Montanus*, and about *Commodus* his Reign, took upon them to be *Prophetesses*, and under that Pretence propagated many monstrous *Hereses*. But since it must be after *St. John's* time, that those Women were in the Church of *Thiatira* ; and since *St. John* here speaks not *Prophetically* of what should be, but *Historically* of what already was, is it not supposable, that these *Montanist Women* should be the *Jesabel* here spoken of ? Besides that, the Character here given her, doth not agree with that *Seet* ; for these *Montanists* were a very severe and strict *Seet*, and that was the main *Motive* which seduc'd *Tertullian* to it : Whereas this *Jesabel*, or *Seet* describ'd by her Name, is here accus'd of *Fornication*, and *sacrificing to Idols*. So that it seems more probable, that by *her* is meant, either the whole *Seet* of the *Gnosticks*, which, as all agree, was infamous for *Lewdness*, *Uncleanness* and *Idolatry* ; or else some particular Woman, who was an eminent *Patroness* and *Ringleader* of that Party. And if he mean this latter, as it seems most probable, by the Distinction he makes between *her*, and *those* that committed *Adultery* with her, that is, her Followers ; then it is probable, that he means *Helena*, the Whore of *Simon Magus*, who was Father of the *Gnosticks* ; whom he stiled his *ἑρμῆς* *Ermoia*, or *first Conception*. And well might she be call'd *Jesabel*, since she so much resembl'd the Wife of *Ahab*, call'd by that Name in her notorious *Whoredoms* and *Idolatries* : But yet in her he reprehends the whole *Seet*, which was all involv'd with her in the same Impenitence. So that it was equally true, both of her and her Followers, that God gave them Space to repent of their *Fornications*, and they repented not ; that is, God's Patience waited on 'em, and gave 'em time to reform their *lewd* and *infamous* Practices ; but still they deferr'd and put it off, and under all his *Forbearance* continu'd obstinate and impenitent. So that the Design of the Words is to represent the Evil of Mens putting off their Repentance, when God in Mercy forbears them, and gives them Space enough to perform it. And how great an Evil this is, I shall endeavour to represent to you,

1. By shewing you the *Wickedness*.
2. The *Aburdity*, and
3. The *Danger* of it.

1. I shall shew you the *Wickedness* of it, and that in these following Particulars :

1. 'Tis

1. 'Tis a *prophane* Mockery of God's Patience.
2. 'Tis an *ungrateful* Undervaluing of his Service.
3. 'Tis an *open* Contempt to his Authority.
4. 'Tis an *impious* Presumption on his Goodness.
5. 'Tis an *arrogant* Defiance of his Displeasure.

1. To defer and put off our Repentance, when God gives us Space to repent, is a *prophane* Mockery of his Patience. That he did not strike us *dead* upon our first Sin, and consign us *immediately* to the *Chains* of Darkness, was purely the Effect of his Goodness. 'Twas this that oblig'd him to try us a *little longer*, in hope that at last we might be prevail'd with to consider our Danger, and correct our Folly, before it had *determin'd* us to an *irreversible* Ruin. Whilst therefore we linger out the Space of our Repentance in Delays, we sport and dally with the *Patience* of God; we promise fair, and give it Hope, that it shall at last obtain its Ends upon us: But when we come to Performance, we *baffle* and *disappoint* it, and render all its *past Attendance* ineffectual. For when the *Date* of our former Promise is expired, and God expects our Performance; instead of That, we only give him new Promises, and pay him with *Words* instead of *Things*; as if by our Promises we only *intended* to raise in him an Expectation of our Repentance, that so we might have an Opportunity to vex him with a *Disappointment*. We promise we will repent hereafter, only to get Leave to sin for the present; and so when *that Hereafter* comes, we promise again, and only repeat the *old* Delusion: As if we meant to *tantalize* his Patience, by profering the *golden Fruit* of our Repentance, and *snatching* it away again, before he can lay hold of it. Now, what a fearful Wickedness is this, for Men to put such Tricks upon the *Almighty*, still to defer the *Payment* of a *Debt* that hath been so long due, and so often demanded, and still to pay his Demands with Promises, and only feed his Expectations with Air! As tho' we thought him bound to *attend* our Leisure, and to give us Credit to run deeper on score, upon the Security of our Promise of *future* Payment, which we have already forfeited over and over.

2. Thus to put off, and delay our Repentance, is a most base and ungrateful Undervaluing of his Service: For the reason why we delay our Repentance, is, because we think, it will be time enough to return to our Duty hereafter, when the Opportunities of Sin are gone, and the Pleasure of it is out of season. For into what *other* Sence can God construe our Delays, but only *this*, that it is our Design to shift off him and his Service, till we have serv'd our Lusts as long as we are able; and never to begin our Repentance, till we are able to be wicked no longer? Now, I beseech you, could you without Horror and Trembling, make such an Address to God as this? O God, I know it is my Duty, and the very End of my Life to serve thee: But, I beseech thee, be not angry, if while I live, I serve my Lusts, and employ the Powers thou hast given me, in Rebellion against thee: And if thou wilt but indulge me this, I will be thy humble Servant when I am good for nothing, neither to serve, nor disobey thee: Do but have patience till I am Bed-rid, and can enjoy the World and my Lusts no longer, and then I will return to thee, and be sorry for my Sins, and wish that I had never offended thee. I would now devote the Service of my Youth and Strength to thee, but that I am sensible, it is too good for thee: And therefore come what will, I will feed my Lusts with the Marrow of my Days; and if the dull insipid Bone will content thee, it is at thy Service. This, though it be horrible Language, is yet the natural Sence of our Delays. We would repent immediately, but that we think, it is a Thousand Pities such fair Opportunities of sinning should be lost, and so many precious Minutes should be so ill bestow'd: So that the reason of our Delay is this; that at present we apprehend, we can spend our time more pleasantly in sinning on, than in the Exercise of a severe Repentance; and consequently, while we can still sin on with Pleasure, we shall still have the same reason to delay; and never think it reasonable to begin our Repentance, till we are old, decrepid, or dying, and can sin with Pleasure no longer. Now, what a *prophane*

phane Reflection is it upon God and his Service, to think our selves *too* good to serve him, till we are good for nothing; that the *Dregs* and *Lees* of our Life are good enough for him, and that he ought to be satisfied with the *Leavings* of our Lusts, and to take it as a Favour that we will repent of our Sins when we are no longer capable of sinning with Pleasure? With what Patience can he endure to be thus slighted and contemned by us, to be thus rudely put off with the *Refuse* of our Lusts, thus unmannerly treated with the *Scraps* of the *Devil's* Table?

3. To defer our Repentance, when God gives us Space to repent, is an open Contempt of his Authority: For by the *Laws* of *Religion*, we are bound, either always to continue innocent; or when we have contracted Guilt, to expiate it by *immediate* Repentance: For so long as we continue under any guilty Impenitence, we are in a State of *actual* Rebellion against God; and are not only accountable for the Guilt of the first Sin; but also for *that* of not having repented of it. And though we do not repeat the first Sin any more, yet our very continuing impenitent under the Guilt of it, brings a distinct Guilt upon us, and renders us doubly criminal in the sight of God: For unless our sinning against God doth *cancel* the Obligation of his Laws, they must necessarily oblige us to repent; that is, to revoke our wicked Purpose, and return to our Obedience, as soon as ever we have broken and transgressed it. 'Tis true indeed, as for particular *affirmative* Precepts, they being always relative to *Time*, and *Place*, and *Persons*, are to be practised only in *special* Times, and *pertinent* Occasions; because they being but Parts of a good Life, must give way by turns for other Parts and Instances of it; which are of the like particular and limited Nature with themselves; but yet we are always obliged to the Purpose and Disposition of Practising these, whenever Occasion doth require it. A Man is not always bound to be doing *Justice*, by giving *Alms*, or saying his *Prayers*; but to the *Devotion* of Prayer, or the *Disposition* of Justice, and the *Charity* of Alms he is continually obliged: These being Works of the *inward* Man, cannot be limited to Times and Opportunities, nor receive any *accidental* Determinations from without; but are always possible, and always good, and always necessary: For the Performance of them depends only on the *Grace* of God, and the *Will* of Man; and *that* never fails, if *this* doth not; and therefore is always possible, unless we will not; but it is always necessary whether we will or no: So that when we have broken our Purpose of obeying God by any *actual* Sin, it is another distinct Sin, not to renew it by immediate Repentance; and when by this actual Sin, we have lost our Disposition to obey God, and contracted the contrary, there is in this a *proper* Guilt, and Venom distinct from that *actual* Sin that introduced it. But then there are *general* Precepts of *Religion*; such as to love God, and to Repent from *dead* Works; the *first* of which includes the *whole* Religion of a Man; the *second*, the *whole* Religion of a Sinner; and consequently, we being *both*, must needs be universally obliged to both these Duties in all Accidents, Times, and Cases. For when once we have *apostatized* from our Duty, all our *After-Obedience* is an Act of Repentance; and therefore, though the Command of it be affirmative, yet because it is universal, including all those Duties, which by binding at *several* Times, do fill up all our Time; there can be no Time in which we are not bound to repent. This I have the longer insisted on, because it is a great *Question* among the *Roman* *Casuits*, whether a Man be always bound to this Duty; and *some* of them have been so wicked, as to determine, that a Man is not bound to repent till he comes to die; *others*, that it is sufficient if he repent *once* a Year; others *thrice*, upon the Three great *Holidays* of *Christmas*, *Easter*, and *Whitsunday*: As if there were any time wherein it were not our Duty to return to our Duty; or the Laws of our Religion did only oblige us at certain Seasons, and in the Intervals gave us a *free* Dispensation to live as wickedly as we pleased. Since therefore as soon as we have sinned, we are bound *immediately* to repent, it necessarily follows, that he who sins, and then delays his Repentance, sins Twice; his very Delay being a farther Provocation. For how can we imagine, that he who persists in *Rebellion* against

against God Twenty Years together, doth not much more offend him, than he who submits within Twenty Months, or Twenty Days, or Twenty Hours; and if the longer we persist, the more we do offend him, then every Delay of our Repentance must needs be a further Provocation. The Sum of all therefore is this; That every Day God calls us to Repentance, and that every Call of his ought to be regarded; and consequently, that every regardless Delay of it, adds to the Heap of our Guilt, and helps to fill up the Measure of our Iniquities. And what a rude Contempt is it of God's Authority, when he commands us to repent to Day, to cry, well, we will repent to Morrow? Lord, we beseech thee, be not so hasty with us, suffer us to offend thee yet a little longer: For whether thou wilt or no, we are resolved to do it. We will repent; but will not be prescribed when; as for that leave it to us: For say what thou wilt, we are fully resolved to take leave to do it when we please. This, in effect, is the impious Meaning of every Delay of our Repentance; and when God commands us to repent, we might as modestly tell him, that we will not repent at all; as when he commands us to repent now, tell him, that we will repent hereafter.

4. To defer our Repentance when God giveth us Space to repent, is an *impious* Presumption on his Goodness. The reason why God forbears us when we sin, is, to give us *second* Thoughts, and to see our Danger, and to run away from it; that so he may not surprise us into Ruin: For the End of his *Long-suffering*, is to lead us to Repentance; but when upon this Consideration, we take Encouragement to delay, we do not only defeat his Goodness, but so far as in us lies, render it injurious to him. For we War against him under the Protection of his Kindness to us; and fortifie our selves in our *Rebellion*, in that very *Goodness* and *Long-suffering*, with which he seeks to conquer and subdue us. O barbarous Ingratitude! That we should fetch Arguments from his Mercy to offend him, and maintain Enmity against him out of the *Revenue* of his own Indulgence! Would you not look on that *Malefactor* as a *Monster*, that should rob his *Judge*, merely because he reprieved him; and use him with all the Despite and Ignominy, because he knew him to be a *merciful* Man, and will be loath to hang him the next *Sessions*? And is it not altogether as monstrous for us to abuse God, because he is kind to us; and to take Encouragement to rob him of our Duty, because we know he is unwilling to ruine us? But tho' every Man hath not Impudence enough to assign this Reason; yet it is plain, this lies at the Bottom of all their *Delays*. Because Sentence against an evil Work is not executed *speedily*, saith the Wise Man, therefore the Heart of the Sons of Men is fully set in 'em to do Evil, Eccles. 8. 11. But what *horrid* Baseness is this, to urge his Goodness against himself; and fetch Motives from his Mercy, to affront his Authority? It seems, if he were worse to us, we would be better to him; and if he were less kind, we would be more dutiful. O Wretches that we are! I had almost said, 'tis even pity that we have a God to deal with, that we are not under the Government of some *Fury* that would watch for our *Halting*, and catch at all Opportunities to plague and punish us; and we were best have a care we do not presume too much upon God: For tho' he bears long, he will not bear always; and there is nothing can sooner provoke him, than to see us Conduct our *Rebellions* against him under the *Banners* of his own Goodness. This is such an *intolerable* Provocation, as is sufficient to enrage a *Soul* of Patience, and turn the most *boundless* Mercy into *Fury*: And if once his Wrath be kindled against us, he will make us rue for ever in our Abuses of his Goodness.

5. And Lastly, To defer our Repentance, when God gives us Space for it, is an *arrogant* Defiance of his Displeasure: For God hath sufficiently declared to us the Displeasure he takes in the *Delays* of our Repentance. Thus in his *holy* Word he hath given us fair Warning of it: Thus Rom. 2. 4. Despisest thou the Riches of his Goodness, and Forbearance, and Long suffering, not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance? From whence I argue, 1. that the Goodness of God is a *Motive* to Repentance. 2. That not to be persuaded by it, is to despise his Goodness. 3. That this despising his Goodness, by *delaying* our Repentance, is

treasuring up Wrath against the Day of Wrath. So also *Rev 2. 5.* *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first Works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.* Where he plainly declares, that if our Repentance be not very quickly, his Judgments will be *too quick* for us: By which he plainly signifies, how much he is displeased with out *Delays*, how importunately they urge and provoke him to overwhelm us with a *speedy* Destruction. And accordingly, we see by Experience, how he takes some away in their *early* Sins, and gives them no Respite; and he who hath made it *Damnation* to some for not repenting instantly, hath made it *damnable* to all. The Earth doth not open and swallow up all *Rebels* in the Day of their Mutiny; But it did so *once*; and thereby God hath sufficiently signified to all Ages his Displeasure against *Rebellion*: And so it is in deferring Repentance: For that some have smarted for it *eternally*, is a sufficient Manifestation that God is displeased with every one that delays it. Whilst therefore we delay our Repentance from time to time, we sit down quietly under the *divine* Displeasure; as if it were altogether indifferent whether the *Almighty* be pleased or displeased with us; we do as good as say, *Lord, we know well enough, thou wouldst have us repent immediately, and that if we do not, thou wilt be angry with us; but be thou never so angry, we will not repent as yet, we must enjoy our Lusts a little longer, and if thou wilt be displeased, we will run the venture. We had rather endure thy Frowns a while, than part with our Sins for ever; and think it much more tolerable to be hated by the Fountain of all Love and Goodness, than abandoned of all our sinful Pleasures.* This is such Language, perhaps, as the *boldest* Sinner would hardly be able to pronounce without trembling; but yet such as it is, it is the natural Sense of every Man's Actions, who delays and puts off his Repentance: He knows, that God is displeased with him, but regards it not; and, as if he were ambitious of being a *Hero* in Wickedness, he defies *Heaven*, and dallies with its *Thunder-Bolts*, and runs into the Mouth of its *Cannon*, whilst they are spitting Fire, and roaring out Destruction upon him.

And thus you see the monstrous Wickedness of Mens delaying their Repentance, which is such, as had we not *seared* our Consciences, and stifled our *natural* Sense of God we could never be able to reflect on without *Horror* and *Agonies*. And so I pass to the

Second Head of Discourse, the *great Absurdity* of delaying our Repentance; which I shall endeavour to demonstrate in these following Particulars:

1. It is *putting off* a Work that must be done, to the most *unfitting* Season of doing it.
2. It is *putting it off* upon no other reason, but what will *hereafter* be more *prevalent* than *now*.
3. It deprives us of the Satisfaction of having done what we must do at last, and prolongs the Pain and Trouble of doing it.
4. It defers the doing it, upon no other Presumption, but that it shall one Day *dearly repent* of its own Neglect.

1. To delay our *Repentance*, is, to *put off* a Work that must be done, to the most *unfitting* Season of doing it. That Repentance is indispensibly necessary to the Recovery and Happiness of a Sinner, is a Principle wherein all the reasonable World are agreed: And since it must be done, it is highly reasonable, we should take the best Opportunity of doing it: And for a Man to say, I must do such a thing, and am resolv'd to do it; but however, I will take the most improper Season to do it in, is the most absurd and ridiculous Thing in the World. But for a Man to *repent* in, there is no Season can be so convenient as the *present*: For it will never be so easie for us to *repent*, as *now*; the Difficulty of it will daily grow upon our Hands; and if we do not engage in it *immediately*, it will be harder to *morrow* than it is to *day*. When Men begin to sin, their Nature *starts* and *boggles* at it, from an *innate* Sense of God, and of their Duty; and this *natural* Shiness must be tam'd
and

and broken, e're they can be thorough-pac'd in Wickedness: But when they have inur'd themselves to it by frequent Acts, they grow by degrees familiar with it, and then every Act breeds Delight in it, and every Delight begets a Desire of repeating it, and that Desire brings forth a new Act. And when a Man hath walk'd the Rounds a while in this Circle, at last he centers in Custom and Habit of sinning, and then every new Act will confirm the Habit, and root it deeper in our Natures; and so as we sin on, it will grow stronger and stronger, till at last it becomes almost fatal and necessary, and then the Lord have Mercy upon us: For without a Miracle of Grace, we shall never be able to retrieve our selves. Thus every Step we take in our sinful Progress, leads us further out of the Way, and renders our Return home more hard and difficult: So that by going on in a sinful Course, we do what in us lies, to block up the Way of our Return; and do as it were, build a Wall behind us, to disable our selves from making any Retreat. What a ridiculous Thing therefore is it, for Men to pretend that they will repent, but not yet; when it is so apparent, that if they repent not now, it will never be so easie again as long as they live? To morrow it will be more difficult than now; and every Day it is delay'd, will drive it nearer to an Impossibility: So that by our foolish Delays, we do but make Work for our selves, and heap up Difficulties on our own Heads: We resolve that we will repent; but withal, that we will not go about it, till we have render'd it more difficult, and our selves less able to do it. Our Soul is wounded, and must die, without the sovereign Balsam of Repentance; which we therefore resolve to apply, and make use of: But first, her Wound shall fester into a Gangrene, not to be cur'd, but by the most painful Lancings and Corrosives. And can there be any thing more ridiculous, than for a Man to resolve to do a thing, and at the same time resolve to make it more difficult before he doth it? For certainly, if our Repentance, after so many Delays, should at last commence, which is very questionable, it will, in all probability, be accompany'd with so many sad Circumstances, so many Tumults of Passion, and Uproars of Conscience, so many piercing Sorrows and bitter Agonies, that we shall dearly repent we did not repent sooner.

2. To delay our Repentance, is, to resolve to defer this Work to hereafter, upon a Reason which will then be much more prevalent than now: And for a Man to defer a Thing to hereafter, which he resolves to do, upon such a Reason as will be much more prevalent hereafter than now, is doubtless, the absurdest Thing in the World. Now, the main Reason why Men are now unwilling to repent, is, because they love their Sins, and are unwilling to part with them; and in all Likelihood, hereafter they will be much more unwilling: So that this Reason will every Day improve upon their hands; and have so much the more Strength, by how much the longer they defer their Repentance. So that we have no reason in the World against fixing on the present Time, but only because it is present: But when hereafter comes to be present, the Reason will be just the same. But as for our Unwillingness to leave our Sins, if that be the Reason of our Delay, that will every Day increase and grow more prevalent upon us: For Sin gains upon the Will by Practice; the Delight of it recommends it to the Desire, and renders us more fond of its Embraces: So that if we defer our Repentance till hereafter, because we are unwilling to leave our Sins, when that hereafter is present, we shall have much more reason to defer than now: And so the plain Sense of deferring our Repentance upon this Reason, is this; *I cannot yet forsake my Sins, because I love them, and am highly pleas'd with them; but hereafter, I am resolv'd, I will: But first, I will act them a little longer, and grow more in love with them; and then, when I love them more, and am more enslav'd to them, I will be sure to hate and forsake them for ever.* Whilst therefore we delay our Repentance, because our Sins do please us, we shall have the same Reason to delay it for ever. For the longer we live in Sin, in all Probability, the more it will please us; and so Twenty Years hence, the Reason of our Delay will be far more prevalent than now; and if we forsake not our Sin, till it ceases to please us, we shall never forsake it as long as we live. So that to resolve not to repent now, because our Sins do please us, is the same thing in effect, as to resolve not to repent at all; And indeed, this generally lies at the Bottom of such Resolutions;

ons; when Mens Consciences, like importunate Creditors, begin to dun and clamour upon them they are forc'd many times to give good Words, and appoint some future Day of Payment, else they will put them to a great deal of Trouble, and ever and anon arrest them with Horrors and Affrightments; but still they purpose to run further in Debt, and to put off the Day of Payment from time to time, till they are *utterly insolvent*. So that by these Promises or repenting *hereafter*, Men only delude themselves; and under a specious Pretence of *future* Repentance, put Tricks upon their Consciences to blind and bribe them, that they may not disturb them whilst they are sinning themselves into Ruin.

3. By delaying our Repentance, we deprive our selves of the Satisfaction of having done what we must do at last, and prolong the Pain and Trouble of doing it. To have accomplish'd a necessary Work, especially if it be difficult and important, is a great Satisfaction to the Mind: And whereas, whilst it is yet to do, the Prospect of the Pain and Labour we must undergo in doing it, creates in us a great deal of Trouble and Anxiety: When once it is done, the very Reflection on the Pains and Labours we have past, sweetens our *present* Repose, and crowns it with greater Joy and Triumph. And so it is with Repentance, which we all acknowledge to be a most necessary Work, and of the vastest Moment and Importance to us: And tho' it be never so painful and difficult, yet we must undergo it, or that which is much more intolerable: So that if once it were done, it could not but give a great Satisfaction to our Minds, and fill us with unspeakable Joy.

When a Man shall thus reflect with himself; *Blessed be God, I have done that Work, which, had it been yet to do, I must have done, or been undone for ever. I charged through all those Pains and Difficulties that were wont to startle and affright me, and by the Grace of Heaven, am come off victoriously. O happy Atchievement! How well am I rewarded for all my Labour! Now I am past it, and settled in the quiet Possession of my Conquest!* When, I say, a Man can thus reflect with himself, it must needs be *unspeakable* Pleasure to him: Whereas, he who defers his Repentance, and hath it yet to do, is in *perpetual* Pain and Anxiety; whilst he thus considers with himself; *Alas, to repent, is a very sad and painful Work! But yet, at last, I must undergo it, or suffer that which is a thousand times more painful. I must lament and weep for my Folly, watch and pray against it, struggle with, and overcome it, or rue for it to all Eternity. O that it were done! But, O, how loth am I to go about it! O that my Pain were over! But, O, how afraid am I to endure it! Thus the poor Wretch, for fear of Pain, exposes himself to a lingering Torment; and whilst by one brave Attempt he may ease himself, and set his Soul at Rest for ever, he languishes away his Life in Misery, and is sick with the Fear of his Remedy: Just like some Men under the Torments of the Stone; they know, they must be cut, or die; but the frightful Apprehensions they have of their Remedy, makes them delay it from time to time. They will endure it, they say, rather than lose their Lives; but when they come to the Tryal, their Heart fails, and they must needs have a little longer Respite; and all the while they are full of Pain and Uneasiness, and full of *sad* Apprehensions of those severer Pains they must endure in order to their Recovery; and yet these, at last, they must endure too, or that which is much more terrible to them: Whereas had they but endured them at first, they might have saved themselves all those Torments, and all those Fears of farther Torments which they endured in the time of their Delay. And is not this extremely absurd and ridiculous? And yet just thus it is with those who put off their Repentance. Had they repented on their *first* Lapse, their Hearts might have been at ease a great while ago, and they might have sav'd themselves all those Gripes and Twinges of Conscience which they have been forc'd to endure. But Repentance, they thought, was a *sad* Remedy; and the Fear of that too, augmented the Torment of their Disease. But, be it never so sad, they know well enough, they must at last apply it, or perish for ever. Well; but they will apply it, that they resolve on; but fain they would have a little longer Respite. Ah foolish Souls! Will it *hereafter* be more *easy* than *now*, to you? Will your Delay, do you think, *mollifie* the Pain and Anguish of it? Alas no; it will rather render it *more* *dolorous*. So that all the while*

while you *delay*, and think of it *only*, but do not do it, you do but *anticipate* the *Torment*, and *prolong* the *Misery* of it: And whereas, if once it were done, you wou'd be at Rest, and all the Pain of your *past Guilt*, and the Fear of your *future Repentance*, would be over; whilst you *only* think upon it, but do it not, it is a continu'd *Disease* to you; and the very *Apprehensions* you have of it, are many times more *dolorous* than the *Performance*.

4. And Lastly, To *delay* our Repentance, is to do a Thing upon no other *Presumption*, but that we shall one day *repent* of our own Action. And can there be any thing more *ridiculous*, than for a Man to do an Action, in hope that he shall live to *repent* of it? For either the Action is *reasonable*, or it is not: If it be, why shou'd he hope to *repent* of it? If it be not, why shou'd he be so extravagant to do it? So that for a Man to do a Thing, upon *Presumption* that he shall *repent* of it, is, to proclaim *himself* a *Fool*; and yet this is the Case of him who *delays* his Repentance. For that this very *Delay* is a Sin superadded to those *criminal* Actions of which he ought to *repent*, I have *already* demonstrated: From whence it *necessarily* follows, that *this* must be repented of as well as *those*. So that for Men to encourage themselves not to *repent* at *present*, in hope that they shall *repent* *hereafter*, is to act professedly contrary to the Reasons of Things. For if the Nature of our *Delay* is such, as that we have reason to hope, we shall one Day *repent* of it; this is so far from being a proper Encouragement to it, that 'tis one of the strongest Reasons that can be urg'd against it: And for a Man to *rob*, in hope to be hang'd for it; or to drink deadly Poison, in hope to be convuls'd and Tormented with it, is every whit as wise and rational, as to *delay* our Repentance, in hope to *repent* of it. For who, but a Mad man, or one who is resolv'd to act counter to all Rules of Reason, would ever practise on this extravagant Conclusion; *I will do this or that Action at present, in hope that hereafter I shall be sorry for, and extreamly ashamed of it, and wish a thousand times that I had never done it. I know, it is a great Evil, and do plainly perceive, that one time or other I shall find it so: But come what will, I will venture upon it, in hope that hereafter I shall be ashamed with the Horror of it, and tormented for it upon the Rack of a self-condemning Conscience.* And now, I beseech you, is this a *reasonable* Hope, or proper Encouragement for a wise Man to act upon? Or rather, is it not one of the most absurd and foolish, that ever any Fool or Mad-man proceeded on? And yet *this* is plainly the Meaning of our Pretension, when we *delay* our Repentance, in hope to *repent* of it *hereafter*.

And thus you see, how *extravagantly* absurd it is for Men to *defer* and *put off* their Repentance. So that methinks, had we any Reverence for our selves, any Respect for those Reasonable Natures by which we are constituted Men, we should be ashamed to act so inconsistently with all the Rules of Reason and Sobriety. And so I pass on to

3. The Third and Last Head; under which I propos'd to demonstrate the mighty Evil of delaying our Repentance; and that is, the Danger of it; which I shall endeavour to make appear in these following Particulars:

1. Every *Delay* of our Repentance, is a nearer Approach towards Final Impenitence.
2. 'Tis a *desperate* Venture of our *Opportunity* of Repentance.
3. It *endangers* the forfeiting that Grace, without the Assistance whereof we cannot *repent*.
4. It drives us *nearer* to the last Extremity.

1. Every *Delay* of our Repentance, is a nearer Approach towards *final Impenitence*. For a sinful State is like a *shelving* Pool, in which the farther a Man wades, the deeper it is; and so deeper and deeper, till he come to the Bottom of it; and when we are there, we are sunk beyond all Hope of Recovery; so that at every Step forward, we are in Danger of going beyond our Depth, and plunging into an *irreversible* Ruin. For *final* Impenitence, which is the Consummation and Perfection of all Sin, is nothing but a *persevering* Neglect, or Refusal

to repent. And as a Man is always dying, and that which we call *Death*, is only the *last* and *finishing* Act of it : So *final* Impenitence is not the Sin of one *Day* or *Moment*, unless it be by Accident ; but it is a State of Sin begun as soon as ever the Sin is acted, and carried on through each *repeated* Action ; and, in fine, is nothing but the same Sin so many times told over. But if it should happen, that he who sinned *Yesterday*, should die to *Day*, it would be *final* Impenitence in him to defer his Repentance that one Day. So that our first Delay of Repentance, is the Beginning of our *final* Impenitence, which in all its *Periods*, differs from the Delay, only by Chance and Accident : It is materially the *same* Sin ; and if Death chance to strike the next *Moment*, it will also have the *same* Formality. For as he that dies *young*, dies as really, as he that dies after *Fourscore* Years ; so he that dies in the midst of a short Delay of his Repentance, is as well *finally* Impenitent, as he that is snatch'd away to die *for ever* after *Fourscore* Years Impenitence : For though the Evil be not so *great*, nor the Judgment consequent to it so *heavy* ; yet is it as *fatal*, and as *irreversible*, as the Decree of Damnation on the *fallen* Angels. So that all the time we *delay*, and put off our Repentance, we are bordering on the worst of Evils, we are just upon the *Confines* of an *irreversible* Mischief, and the next Step, for all we know, may carry us beyond Recovery. For if Death should intervene between us and to *morrow*, this Day's Delay will be *fatal* and *irreparable*. And can we stand upon the *Brinks* of this *Precipice* and feel how the Ground sinks underneath us, and yet sleep on securely, without ever thinking whither we are falling, or being in the least concerned at this *amazing* Prospect of our Danger ? Methinks, if we had any Concern for our own Safety, we should think it high time *now* to start up, and run away from our *neighbouring* Ruin, and not presume any longer to swim within the Circumference of this *fatal Whirl-Pool* that is every *Moment* sucking us in, and, for all we know, the next Moment may swallow us up irrecoverably.

2. Every Delay of our Repentance is a desperate Venture of the *Opportunity* we have to repent in ; and that is this *present* Life ; which is the *Day* in which we are to do our Work, the *Time* of Tryal in which we are to pass our *Probation*, and perform our *Exercise* of *Eternity* : And therefore, considering how uncertain this Life is, and to how many *Events* and *Casualties* it is exposed, it must needs be a most *desperate* Venture, for a Man to *delay* his Repentance. For who can tell, but while we talk of Repenting *hereafter*, there may be some *latent* Disease *undermining* the *Fort* of Life, and ready to seize the *Garrison* of our Souls : So that perhaps, before *this* Day is at an end, we may be surprized in the midst of our *Delay*, and lose all our Hopes of *to morrow* ? For what is *vain* Man, that he should talk of repenting *hereafter*, when perhaps, whilst the Word is in his Mouth, there may be an *Imposthume* in the Head or Breast, or a *ripe-harden'd* Stone in his Kidney, ready to drop down into his Bladder the next Moment ; when he may be *inflamed* with a *Fever* by what he drinks to *Night*, or drowned in a *Surfeit* with what he eats to *Morrow* ; when he may *expire* his Soul with the next Breath, or suck in *Poison* with the next Air ; and so many *unlook'd* for Accidents may put an end to his Talk of repenting *hereafter*, and render it impossible for ever ? And suppose we should be thus *surprized*, as many others have been before us, that while we are *merry* and *jolly* in our Sins, that all on a sudden we should be hurried away out of the Company of our *jovial* Associates, into that of *howling* and *tormented* Spirits ; and from our *Songs* and *Laughter*, into *weeping*, and *wailing*, and *gnashing of Teeth* ; how should we be *blanked* and *amazed*, and with what *Horror* and *Astonishment*, should we reflect upon the *woful* Change, and upon our own *desperate* Folly, that was the Cause of it ? How dare we then talk of repenting *hereafter*, who cannot command one *Moment* of *future* Time, nor promise our selves one Day longer ? When, for all we know, the Hope of *Eternity*, that is *now* in our hands, may be lost *for ever*, and drop through our Fingers, before to *Morrow* Morning ; and we that lie down this Night, and sleep securely in our Sins, may before the next *Twilight*, awake with Horror and Amazement in *Hell* ? Blessed God ! that ever any *reasonable* Creatures, should be so stupified, to venture a *Soul*,
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and an *everlasting* Interest, on so great an Uncertainty ; and rather than begin his Repentance to day, run the Hazard of being *eternally* miserable to *Morrow Morning* ! That he, who will not trust his Gold one *Hour* in the Possession of a Thief, nor his Life one *Minute* within the Reach of a Lion's Paw ; should abandon his *Soul* whole Months and Years together, to the Mercy of a Danger great enough to distract all the Wit of Mankind, did they but fully understand it ! Let us therefore consider, that the *present* Time only is in our Power ; and that as for the *future*, it is wholly in God's : So that while we defer our Repentance for the *future*, we as it were cast Lots for our *Souls*, and venture our *everlasting* Hopes upon a Contingency that is not in our Power to dispose of. For all we know, this may be the *Evening* of our *Day* of Tryal ; and if it be, our *Life* and *Eternity* depends upon what we are now doing. Wherefore it highly concerns us, as we regard our own Safety, wisely to manage this last Stake ; the *winning* or *losing* whereof, may prove our *Making* or *Undoing*.

3. Every *Delay* of our Repentance endangers the *Forfeiture* of that Grace, without the Assistance whereof, we can never repent to purpose. For we can no more repent without God's Grace, than we can live without our Food. *No Man can come to me*, saith our Saviour, *except the Father which hath sent me, draw him*. Joh. 6. 44. But since God hath promised, that if we *draw near to him*, he will draw near unto us, Jam. 4. 8. that if we *work out our own Salvation*, he will work in us to will, and to do, Philip. 2. 12. and that he will give the *holy Spirit* unto every one that asks him, Luke 11. 23. Since, I say, God hath thus intail'd his Grace upon our Endeavours, Repentance is within our Power, so long as that Grace is so ; by which, if we do our Endeavour, we shall be enabled to it. He who can repent by the Grace of God, is able to repent, so long as he is able to obtain his Grace to assist and concur with his Endeavours ; but if he once withdraw his Grace, and give us over to our own Hearts Lusts, then are we no more able to repent by our own natural Strength and Power, than a *Clod* of Earth is to mount up to *Heaven*, and fix it self a *glorious* Star in the Firmament : But all the time we do delay our Repentance, we are wearying out the Grace of God ; which, whilst we are running away from God and our Duty, follows us with Importunities to return ; but instead of complying with it, we still defer to *listen* to its Sollicitations, and put it off from time to time, with *false* and *empty* Promises ; what can be expected, but that after so many Defeats and Disappointments, it should at last, *abandon* us to our selves, and leave us to the *miserable* Fate of our own Folly and Madness : And if once it doth so, farewell to all Hopes of our Recovery. Consider therefore, O thou *vain* Man, that sayst thou wilt repent *hereafter*. Must thou command God to wait thy Leisure, or fasten his Grace with such *adamantine* Chains, as that it should never be able to get loose from thee ? Art thou sure, it will be always at thy Beck ; or that, notwithstanding thy long Provocations, it will be ready to come to thy Aid, whensoever thou callest for its Assistance ? For by promising to repent *hereafter*, thou dost not only promise for thy self, but for the Grace of God too ; whose Assistance is as necessary to thy Repentance, as thy own Endeavour : And methinks, 'tis a strange piece of Confidence in thee, to promise for that which thou hast so much disobliged, and which upon that account thou hast so little Reason to trust to. 'Tis true, God hath promised you his Grace, but I beseech you, where hath he promised that you shall have it when you please ? Or, that after all his Tenders, and your scornful Refusal of it, it shall be still at your Choice, whether you will at last accept of, or again refuse it ? For unless you can produce some such Promise as this, you can have no reason to expect that God will still continue his Grace to you, how long soever you refuse and reject it : And if he should at last deal by you, as you have dealt by him, this will be the *final* Issue ; because when he hath called, you have refused ; when he hath stretched out his Hand, you have not regarded ; but have set all his Counsels at naught, and would not hearken to his Importunities : Therefore when you call, he will not answer ; when you seek he will not be found ; but will even laugh at your Necessity, and mock when your *last* Extremity comes upon you. And
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should things be reduc'd once to this *sad* Issue, *woe* be to us that ever we were born.

4. And Lastly, Every Delay of our Repentance drives nearer to the *last* Extremity ; which is that of a *Death-Bed* Repentance : And how great a one that is, I have already shewed you at large, and given you evident Proof, that tho' it be not absolutely desperate, yet it is most fearfully hazardous and comfortless ; and yet this is the common Center to which all our *Delays* do naturally tend. We venture to sin on, because we know, that if we do repent, God will have Mercy upon us, and so we do resolve upon both ; that is, to sin *now*, and to repent *hereafter*. And by this Train the Devil tould us on through all the Stages of Sin and Life, till we come to our *Death-Bed* ; and then when our Time and Strength is spent, we shall feel our selves departing into a long Eternity of *Weal* or *Woe*, and have nothing to bear us company thither, but our Sins and Guilt ; which if they, be not cancelled in an Instant, will *consign* us immediately to *endless* Misery ; and whether we look either within, or without, or above us, shall be able to see nothing but a black dismal Cloud hanging over us, and Causes of Fear surrounding us on every side : How will our Heart *sink* within us, and our Soul *quiver* on our Lips, to think how *naked* and *harbourless* she is left ; having no other Refuge to fly to, now the *Avengers* of Blood are at her Heels, but only that *wronged* and *affronted* Mercy which all her Life-time she spurned and trampled on ? When we shall consider what a vast Work we have to do, how little Time we have to do it in, how our own Strength is spent, and what little Reason we have to expect that God should strengthen us by a Miracle ; in what a Tumult will our Souls be ? How shall we quake and tremble, to think whither we are going, and what will become of us for ever ? Surely, if we die in our Wits, and are not *Atheists* or *Sots*, it will be impossible for us to reflect on our selves, and the fearful *Risque* we are running, without extream Horror and Amazement. For we must be strangely stupified, if when we perceive our selves upon the *Confines* of *Eternity*, within a very few Moments of being Happy or Miserable for ever, we do not awake from our Security ; and if we do, the Vastness of the Work that lies upon our Hands, the Number of the Guilt that will *stare* us in the Face, and the little Time and Power we have to perform the *one*, and expiate the *other*, must needs put our *guilty* Consciences into a fearful Agony, and *unchain*, and let *loose* all its Terrors upon us : And then how miserable will our Condition be, when we shall look about for Comfort, and see nothing but God's *everlasting* Threats ready to be fired and discharged upon us ; and not one Promise opening a Door of Hope, nor any *Arm* of Mercy held forth to catch us now we are leaping down into *Eternity* ; but *Hell* gaping for us, as wide as our *Grave*, and both ready to receive a part of us, and our selves into those Two *sad* Habitations ? O, then shall we sigh and lament our *Folly*, and curse our *lingring* Delays, and wish a Thousand and a Thousand Times we had begun our Repentance sooner. This is the *sad* Extremity whereunto we are driving in every *Delay* of our Repentance : And considering all these Things, methinks, all these Dangers whereunto our *Delays* expose us, should be enough to frighten the most resolute Sinner into *present* Purposes of Amendment. And O would to God, that this might be the happy Effect of it ! That Men at last, would be but so wise, as to consider these things, how *monstrously* Wicked, how *shamefully* Absurd, how *fearfully* Dangerous, it is for them to put off their Repentance ; and that considering this, they would be so kind to themselves, as now at last, to betake themselves to the Discipline of a severe Repentance. This, I know, is a Word that Men are extream frightened at ; they think, if once they betake themselves to Repentance, they must encounter with *vast* Difficulties, and enter into a very *dolorous* and *unpleasant* Course of Life ; which, while they can live merrily in their Sins, they are very loth to do. And indeed, I cannot deny, but after an *habitual* Course of Sin, our Entrance into a *penitent* Life, will in all probability, be attended with a great deal of Sorrow and Disquiet ; but who can help this ? It is you that have brought this Inconvenience on your selves, by deferring your Repentance so long ; and assure your selves, the longer you defer it, the more difficult

ficult it will be *whenever* you begin. But, for God's sake, consider, Sirs, *which* do you think, will be more uneasy, to undergo the Severities of Repentance for a Time, or Hell-fire for ever; to weep for your Sins whilst you have Hope of Mercy, to contest against them whilst you have a Prospect of Victory, or sigh and groan for 'em to all Eternity, without any Hope of Ease or Redemption? For whether you will or no, you must endure Repentance or Hell. And therefore, since there is no other Remedy, at least, be persuaded to chuse that which is most tolerable: And if you do so, I am sure, you must conclude, that 'tis infinitely easier to repent than be damned. But yet it is plain, that Men do commonly *fantie* Repentance to be much more grievous than it is: For could they once persuade themselves to resolve upon the Work, and seriously to engage in it, they would find, the greatest part of the Trouble were over: For the main Difficulty of Repentance, lies in forming our Resolution. This, indeed, will exact great Consideration, and vigorous Struggling with the Wicked Habits and Inclinations of our own Natures: But when we have so far overcome our selves, as to obtain a full and clear Consent and Resolution, we have pass'd the main Brunt of our Spiritual Warfare; and if we have but the Courage to keep our ground, we shall soon be *crowned* with the Joys of Victory; and that which seem'd at first so frightful and terrible to us, will presently *grow* tolerable, and soon after easie, and after that, by degrees, so pleasant and delightful, that we shall prefer it before all the Pleasures of Sense; and feel our selves infinitely more blest'd and happy in it, than ever we were in the midst of the highest Ravishments of our *sinful Delights*. Come then, my Brethren, let us stand no longer *amusing* our selves with Difficulties; but let us seriously consider the indispensable Necessity of it, the great Assistance God hath promis'd us, if we will speedily undertake it, and the immense *Rewards* he proffers to encourage us to it; and let us never leave pressing our selves with these Considerations, till we have obtain'd of our selves a full and free Consent to it, and *wrought* our Wills into a serious and hearty *Resolution*. And when we have prevailed thus far, we have gotten over the greatest Difficulty that lies *between* us and Heaven; and if we do but vigorously pursue our *Resolution*, our Work will every Day *grow* easier and easier, and so at last it will be our Recreation, and we shall reap from it so much Peace of Conscience, so much Joy in the Holy Ghost, such a calm and *sweet* Enjoyment of our selves, and such a glorious Hope of a future *blessed Immortality*, as will carry us with *unspeakable* Vigour through all the *weary* Stages of our Duty, till we are arriv'd to our Journeys End, *where* all the Sorrows of our Repentance shall be *swallowed* up in *everlasting* Joys and Triumphs.

DISCOURSE VI.

UPON

LUKE xxii. 42.

Nevertheless, not my Will, but thine be done.

THESE Words are a Part of our Saviour's Prayer in his Agony ; in which his Soul being at present under a mighty Contest with the Powers of Darkneſs, and under a vigorous Apprehenſion of his approaching Paſſion on the Croſs, expreſſes an *earnest*, but yet *natural* and *innocent* Deſire of Deliverance ; *Father, if thou be willing, ſaith he, remove this Cup from me.* For his *Humanity* being now in a great meaſure depriv'd of the Supports and comfortable Influence of his *Divinity*, and left alone to grapple by its own *ſingle* Strength, with the powerful Malice of Men and Devils ; and being under a piercing Senſe of thoſe mighty Evils they intended againſt him, began to recoil and ſhrink, out of a natural Deſire to preſerve it ſelf : But yet this natural Deſire being perfectly under the Government of his Reason, and that as perfectly under the Government of God, He does to this Effect addreſs himſelf to God, *Father, if it be thy Will, remove this Cup from me. I do not deſire in the leaſt, to controul, or croſs thy bleſſed Will in any thing ; no, rather than thou ſhouldeſt ſuffer the leaſt Diſappointment in thy bleſſed Intentions, I am ready to undergo the utmoſt that the Malice of Men and Devils can inflict upon me : But alas ! The Evils that I feel and fear, are ſo exceeding grievous unto Fleſh and Blood, that if it might be without Contradiction to thy Will, or Prejudice to thy gracious Intentions to a ſinful World, I cannot but earneſtly deſire that they might be remov'd from me. But if there be any the leaſt Competition between thy Deſigns and my Deſires ſo that they do not fairly agree, and perfectly conſiſt with one another, whatſoever I endure, not my Will, but thine be done.*

Behold here a perfect Pattern of Submission to the Will of God, and that under the moſt diſmal and difficult Circumſtances. When he plainly ſaw, it was the Will of his Father to expoſe him to the utmoſt Extremity of Human Miſery, to ob- ject his Naked Breſt to the utmoſt Malice of Men and Devils ; when by the Force of a moſt powerful Inſtinct, his Nature recoild at the Apprehenſion of it, and would fain have been excuſed ; then did he ſupplicate on his *bended* Knees, that his Father would not liſten to the *innocent* Language of his *natural* Fears and Deſires ; but that he would fully execute his own *ſevere* and *terrible* Will upon him ; *not my Will, O Father, i. e. not the Will of my natural Fear and Deſire of Self-Preſervation, but thy Will be done ; though it be to inflict on me the utmoſt Miſery, that a poor Innocent, as I am, can be expoſed to.* The Words being thus explain'd, do naturally reſolve themſelves into this Propoſition,

That God's Choices for us, are much better than our own ; and conſequently, that if it were in *our* Power to determine which of the Two would take Effect, it would be very unreaſonable not to chooſe what God hath choſe for us.

The Truth of which will *evidently* appear, if we consider these Two Things :

1. That God doth as *really* and *heartily* will what is good for us, as we do for our selves.

2. That he knows much better what is good for us, than we.

1. That God doth as *really* and *heartily* will what is good for us, as we do for our selves. *i. e.* So long as we are proper Objects of his *good Will*, and have not sinn'd our selves into an utter Incapacity of being belov'd by him: For then the Case quite *alters*; and that *good Will* which he *formerly* bore us, converts into a *severe Resolution* of making us *dreadful Examples* to others; that so when through our *own* Obstinacy and Incurability he can do no more good upon us, he may do good to *others* by us; and warn them not to imitate our Actions by the *fearful Example* of our Sufferings. But so long as there is any Hope of doing good upon us, he declares himself as *heartily inclined* to do good to us, as ever any Man was to do good to himself: For what mighty Designs hath he set on foot? What expensive Methods hath he us'd to save us? In what passionate Strains hath he express'd his *good Will* towards us, and with what restless Importunity doth he court us to be happy? He swears by his *own* Life, that he desires not our *Ruin*, but rather that we should *return* and *live*; and *solemnly* professes, *that he would have all Men to be saved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth*. And when with *all* his Courtships and Addresses he cannot prevail upon our Obstinacy, to dissuade us from ruining our selves, he puts on the Passions of a *mournful* Friend, and with *yearning Bowels* laments our *fatal Folly*: By *all* which tender Expressions he *plainly declares*, that he doth as *heartily will* our *Welfare*, as we can do our *own*. But because a Firm Belief of this Principle is indispensibly necessary to a Free Submission to his *Heavenly Will*, I shall endeavour briefly to demonstrate the Truth of it from these Four Considerations :

1. That *his* Interest in us is much greater than *ours* in our selves.

2. That his *own Self-Love* doth as strongly incline him to *will* our Good, as *ours* doth to *will* our *own*.

3. That in concerning himself about us, he can have no other End to serve, than what *we* have in being concerned for our selves.

4. That even that *good Will* that we bear to our selves, is only a Derivation from, and Participation of, that Infinite *good Will* which he bears us.

1. That *his* Interest in us is much greater than *ours* in our selves. If we believe him to be the Author of our Beings, we must acknowledge him to have a most *absolute* and *unalienable* Propriety in us; that what we are, as well as what we have, we hold from him, who is the Head-Landlord and Supream Proprietor of *all* those Beings that are deriv'd from him, even as *Brooks* and *Rivulets* owe their Streams to the Fountain whence they *flow*. And can we imagine him not to be greatly concern'd for what he hath so great an Interest in? Or, that he who hath so much greater Propriety in us, should have less regard for us, than we have for our selves? Can it be thought, that the Great Father of Beings should be forgetful of his own *Offspring*? That he, who hath imprinted on all other *Parents*, such a tender Kindness toward their *natural Issue*, should be so regardless of his *own*, as to expose 'em to a *wide Wilderness*, and leave them there to shift for *themselves*? No, doubtless, the mighty Interest he hath in us, cannot but endear his *Affections* to us, and render him mightily concern'd for our Welfare. *Can the Mother forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb? Tea, they may forget, but I will not forget thee, saith the Lord, Isai. 49. 14.* For since every thing is *naturally* inclined to love its *own*, we cannot but conclude, that the God of Nature, from whom all *natural Inclinations* spring, hath in himself a most tender *Regard* for *all* that Family of Beings, of which he is the Parent; especially, considering

2. That *his* own *Self-love* doth as strongly incline him to *will* our *Good*, as *ours* doth to *will* our *own*. For if he love himself, as he cannot *but* do, being infinitely lovely; he must necessarily love what is like him, and affect to propagate *his* own Resemblance. But no *miserable* Thing can be like himself, who is *infinitely* happy; and therefore he can't love to make *others* miserable, since in so doing he must affect to produce what is contrary to himself, which implies a plain Contradiction. For unless he love our Misery, he can't be *supposed* to desire it, because, as I shall shew you by and by, himself can never be the better for it; and therefore if he desire it, it must be for its own sake.

But how is it possible that the same *Being* should love Contraries at same time; that he should at once take Delight in himself, and in what is most unlike him; or, which is the same thing, that he should be pleased with his own *Happiness*, and with our Misery together. So that if he love himself, who is *infinitely* happy, his own *Self-love* must necessarily incine him to *will* the *Happiness* of others; and unless our *Happiness* might be supposed to be prejudicial to his, which is impossible, it would be an Expression of Hatred to himself to wish *ill* to his Creatures. In his willing *Misery* in us, he would manifest himself to be *displeased* with his own *Happiness*, and *openly* declare, that *Misery* was much more grateful to him: For how can he love *Misery* for it self, as he must needs do, if he take Pleasure in ours, and at the same time love himself who is so *infinitely* happy? This therefore we may build upon, with as much Confidence, as upon any *first Principle* in *Philosophy*; that God hath the same Reason to *will* our *Happiness*, as we have to *will* our *own*; that as we would be happy, because we love our selves; so because he loves himself, he would have us be so. He loves that others should be like him, even as every other Being doth, that loves: For what he loves in *himself*, he must love in *another*, and that which he loves in *another*, where it is, he must love to propagate to *another*, where it is not; and consequently, as he must love our *Happiness*, because he loves his *own*; even so for the same Reason, he must love to make us happy.

3. That in concerning himself about us, he can have no *other* End to serve, but *what* we have, in being concern'd for our selves. He is so *infinitely* happy in himself, that he can neither conceive nor desire any *Good* for himself, beyond what is contain'd *within* the *Immensity* of his *own* Being and Perfections: So that *now* he can have no *Self-ends* to serve; because he doth already enjoy all *possible* Degrees of Perfection and Happiness, and so can desire nothing *without* himself, as an Addition to his *own* Beatitude; which is so *infinite* already, that it will admit of *no* Increase. From hence therefore we may be assured that he can have no *other* Reason to concern himself about us, but only to do us *Good*: For to do us *Mischief*, cannot be his End; because he can do himself no *Good* by it; his *Happiness* being already so compleat, that it cannot possibly need our *Misery*, either to increase, or to serve as a *Foil* to it. 'Tis only *Want* and *Indigence*, that make *one* Being desire the *Misery* of *another*. If I desire to rob *another* of his *Happiness*, 'tis to increase or to secure my *own*; if I desire to make *another* miserable, 'tis either to preserve my self from being so, or to procure my self that *ill-natur'd* Comfort of having a *Companion* in *Misery*. But God by the *boundless* Happiness of his Nature, is infinitely raised above all such *mean* Considerations; and therefore cannot have any Temptation in his Nature to do *any* Thing but *Good*, to his Creatures. But doth not the *Scripture* tell us, *that he doth all things for his own Glory*, and that he obtains *this* End, as well by *punishing*, as by *rewarding* his Creatures? Very true; but then it is to be consider'd, that the *Glory* he aims at, consists not in receiving of any *Good* from us, but in doing, and communicating of all *Good* to us: For *infinite* Goodness can no *otherwise* be glorified, than by its *own* Overflowings, and free Communications; and it can no *otherwise* be glorified in the Punishment of its Creatures, but only as it doth *Good* by it: For should it punish without *good* Reason, it would reproach and vilifie it self; but if it doth it for *good* Reason, it must be, because it is *good*, either for it *self* or *others*: For it *self* it cannot be; for how can an *infinitely* happy Being reap any *Good* from *another's* Misery? And therefore

fore it must be for the good of others, either to reduce *those* who are punished, or to warn others by their Example from running away from their Duty and Happiness. So that to do *Good*, is the End of God's Punishment ; and because it is so, he is *glorified* by it ; and considering that he is so *infinitely* happy, that he can no ways serve himself by our Miseries, it is impossible he should have any other End in concerning *himself* about us, but only the *great* and *Godlike* one of doing us good, and making us happy. For the very Notion of an End, includes *Good* ; and therefore since the End of God's Concern about us, cannot be his *own* Good, it must necessarily be *ours*.

4. And Lastly, That even that *good* Will that we bear to our selves, is only a Derivation from, and Participaton of that *infinite* good Will which God bears us. For it is plain, that our *natural* Instincts, and Propensions, must be deriv'd from the *same* Fountain with our Natures, and consequently, that God is the *Author* of both ; and if so, then that *unquenchable* Self-love, and Thirst after Happiness, which is implanted in our Natures, must needs be deriv'd from him, and owe its *Original* to some *overflowing* Spring of Love and Benevolence in his Bosom. For what should move him so to contrive the Frame of our Natures, as that we cannot but love our selves and breathe after our *own* Happiness, but only his *own* good Will to us, and *tender* Care of our Happiness ? What *other* End could he propose to himself, in stamping this *vehement* Propension in our Natures, *only* to excite us by it to be careful of our selves, and to pursue our *own* Interests ? Doubtless, if had not loved us *more* than we love our selves, he would never have caused us to love our selves as we do ; since he could have no other Aim in causing us to do so, but only to oblige us to *befriend* our selves, and contribute all we are able, to our *own* Welfare. And since it was out of *mere* Love to us that he made us to love our selves ; and our *own* Self-love is nothing else but a *Ray* and *Participation* of his Benevolence towards us ; we may be sure, it is *purser* in the Fountain, than it can be in the Channel ; that it is much more *intense* and *vigorous* in his Bosom, than in our *own*. For, as the *natural* Love of all Parents towards their *Offspring*, is a plain Instance of the *indulgent* Care which the *great Father* of Beings hath for *all* his Children, that he hath committed them in their Infancy to such *tender* Nurses, as will be sure to take care for them when they cannot provide for themselves ; that he hath not intrusted them to the Compassion and *good* Nurture of other Beings, to be maintained by the Alms and Benevolence of their *Fellow Creatures* ; but hath taken Security for their *liberal* Nature and Education from the *inmost* Bowels of their Parents : So that *vehement* Propension of Self-love which God hath implanted in us, is a most *genuine* Signature and Impression of his Benevolence towards us ; and shews, how careful he was of us, thus to take Security of our selves for our *own* Welfare, and to oblige us to be happy, by the most *tender* and *vigorous* Passion in our Natures. By all these Considerations, I think, it is as clear as the Sun, that God doth heartily love us, and hath as *unfeigned* a *good-Will* for us, as we can have for our selves : So that unless we can suppose, that we are better able to chuse for our selves, than he, we have at least, as much Reason to acquiesce in his Choices for us, as in our *own*. It is plain, he is as much our Friend, as our *selves* ; and therefore, tho' what he *wills* and *chuses* for us, may in some Particulars, appear very *harsh* and *severe* ; yet that his Intention is *good*, and that he means as well towards us, as we can do towards our *selves* ; and therefore if in the Event it prove not as well for us, as our *own* contrary Will and Choice would have done, we may be sure, that it was not want of *good* Will to us ; but for want of Skill to chuse what was best for us. But if it appear, that he doth not only wish as well to us, as we do to our *selves* ; but also that he knows how to chuse for us a great deal *better* than we ; then we have all the Reason in the World to acquiesce in his Choices, how *grievous* soever they may appear to us, and to join heartily with our *Saviour*, in this *excellent* Petition, *Not our Wills, O Father, but thy Will be done*. Which brings me to

2. The second general Head of Discourse; that as God hath as good a Will to *us*, as we have to our *selves*; so he knows much better what is Good for *us*, than *we*. And to prove the Truth of this, it is sufficient, that God infinitely exceeds *us* in Knowledge and Understanding; he being Omniscient, and having all Things before him in one entire View and Prospect; whereas we see but in part, and know but in part, and are extremely shallow and superficial in our Conceptions of those Things that lie before *us*; which must necessarily render us infinitely less capable of judging what is Good for our selves, than he. And this will more plainly appear, by particular Instances; of which I shall only produce these five:

1. That we many times know only what is Good for our selves singly; but God knows what is Good for *us*, as we are Parts of the Whole in Conjunction with it.

2. We many times know only what is Good for *us*, with respect to such a particular End; but God knows what is Good for *us* in the main.

3. We many times know *this*, or *that*, to be Good for *us* singly, and apart by it self; but God knows whether it be Good for *us* in Conjunction with those Concomitants and Consequents that are necessary to it.

4. We many times know only what is Good for *us*, in respect to our present Temper and Disposition; but God knows what is Good for *us* in Reference to our constant and most abiding Disposition.

5. We many times know what is Good for *us*, with respect to *this* present State of Things; but God knows what is Good for *us*, in Reference to our eternal Condition. In all which Instances, I doubt not to make it appear, that God is much fitter to chuse for *us*, than *we* for our selves.

1. That we many times know only what is Good for our selves singly; but God knows what is good for *us*, as we are Parts of the Whole, and in Conjunction with it. Man is naturally a sociable Creature, and as such, can never be happy alone. His Musick is always best in Consort; when it consists of numerous Voices, every one bears a Part with every one. And since our Nature is such, as that we are not comparably so well pleased with solitary, as with sociable Fruitions; it is every single Man's Interest, that his own private Good should not be separated from the Good of the Whole; that it should not grow like a Wen, by ingrossing the Nourishment that is due to all all the other Parts; but rise and increase in such just Proportions, as is consistent with the Happiness of all the Rest: And there is no Man whatsoever that hath the least Spark of Generosity in him, but to contribute to a Publick Good, would joyfully submit to a great many private Inconveniencies; and would reckon his own personal Damage fairly compensated, by the Advantage that the Publick receives by it. But so narrow and confined is our Prospect of Things, that in our private Choices we many times ignorantly separate our own Interest from the Publick's, and chuse that for our selves, which, should we obtain, would prove very injurious to the Whole. We would fain change our present Condition for some other, which we have Reason to believe, would be much more advantageous to *us*; but should we obtain our Desire, it may be, the Publick would be much more injur'd by it, than our selves could be benefited. Perhaps, we are fittest to do Good in our present Station; or, should we remove, some unworthy Person may get in our Room; or some Person that is more worthy than our selves, may be displaced by *us*; and by a thousand other Ways which we are not able to comprehend, our shifting of Places may so puzzle and disorder the well-laid Scene of Affairs, that had we foreseen it at first, we should much rather have chosen to keep where we are. Again, we lie under the Sense or Apprehension of some great Calamity; and doubtless, if we might chuse for our selves, we would immediately be deliver'd from it: But did we always foresee, how much Good others may reap from our Sufferings, how much our private Infelicity may conduce to the Weal of the Publick, I hope, we should not be such narrow-spirited Persons, as for the sake of our present Ease, to neglect so fair an Opportunity of being publick Benefactors

factors to the World. But now God hath such an *intire* Prospect of all Things before him, that he plainly sees all the *little* Clashings and Interferings of Mens *Private*, with the *Publick Good*. And as he knows, that *we* cannot be *happy* alone, so he resolves that *we* shall not: For he never wishes any Man's *private* Good separately from that of the *Publick*; but in one *steady* Drift, he carries on the Interest of each *single* Part, in Conjunction with the Interest of the Whole. And hence in the Prosecution of *single* Ends, *we* see, he is not always wont to proceed in the most *direct* and *compendious* Way; but oftentimes winds about in a *large* Circuit, in which he infolds and takes in a thousand *concurrent* and *subordinate* Designs; and drives them all at once before him in the *Course* and *Series* of his Providence. And tho' in this *general* Drift of Things, the Concerns of *particular* Men are sometimes set *forwards*, and sometimes *backwards*, in Pursuance of the *main* Design; yet all at last conspires in the *publick Good*, whereof each *Particular* hath a Share. And therefore, tho' for the *publick Good*, *we* sometimes suffer a present Inconvenience, yet since *we* cannot be *happy*, but in Society, it is much better for us that *we* should be *damaged*, than the *Publick*; because the Happiness of each *particular* Member redounds from the Welfare of the *whole* Society, and is necessarily involved in it: And did we but rightly understand our *own* Interest, *we* should never esteem any Thing *Good* for our selves, that is a *Nuisance* to the *Publick*; because whatsoever *this* suffers, *I*, and *every* Man suffer; and unless *I* could be happy alone, *that* can never be for my Interest in *particular*, that is against my Interest in *common*. Since therefore the Happiness of every *Part* is included in that of the *Whole*, and consequently, whatsoever promotes the *Publick Good* is beneficial to each *particular* Member; it hence necessarily follows, that God can chuse much better for *us*, than *we*. For whereas generally, our Foresight is limited within the narrow *Horizon* of our own *particular* Concerns, by reason whereof *we* cannot many times avoid chusing against the *common* Interest; God hath the whole *Series* of Things before him, and so must necessarily see, even from the Beginning to the End, what is for the *publick* Interest, and what not: And therefore since he who is *sole* Administrator of the *publick* Bank of *Human* Interest, knows how to make the *best* Improvement of it; it is doubtless, much *more* advantageous for us, that he should manage all our *particular* Shares of it, than that *we* should re-assume them in our *own* Hands, and manage them separately by themselves: And tho' under *his* Conduct and Management *we* suffer some *present* Inconveniences; yet so long as *we* are sure of *this*, that the *Publick Good* requires it, and it is promoted by it, *we* have all the Reason in the World to be satisfied. And this was the Case in the Text; the Inconvenience which our *blessed* Lord did *here* so earnestly deprecate, was indispensibly necessary for the *Commonweal* of Men, in which himself had a large Share, being a *Member* of the *Corporation* of Mankind: So that had *God* granted his Desire, and excused him *that* bitter Cup he drank, not only Mankind in *general*, but himself in *particular*, as he was a Man, would have been very much damnified by it: For he would have been deprived of those *Felicities* which he *now* enjoys in *common* with us, as he is the *Head* of a *glorious* Church, whom he redeemed and purchased with his Blood: He would have fallen *short* of that *Mediatorial* Dignity to which he is now advanc'd, and lost the Satisfaction of being the Author of our Happiness, and seeing the *blessed* Fruits of the *Travail* of his Soul; by all which, he hath been abundantly compensated for those *momentary* Sufferings he indur'd. So that in the Issue, *we* see, it was *well* for *him*, as well as for *us*, that the Will of *God* took place, his own *personal* Share in the *common* Happiness of Men being enough to recompense him a *thousand* Fold for whatsoever he suffered to procure it. Upon this Account therefore it is best that *God* should chuse for us; because he always chuses what is *Good* for us in Conjunction with the *Publick*; in the Prosperity whereof all our *particular* Welfare is involv'd.

2. We many times only know what is Good for us, with respect to such a *particular* End; but God knows what is Good for us in the *main*. The generality of Men, we see, are so *rash* and *precipitant*, in pursuit of their *particular Ends*, that they commonly overlook those *Things* that are of more *general* and *Catholick* Concern to them; and run *themselves* upon a thousand *Inconveniencies* for the sake of such *particular Goods* as can never make them any *reasonable Amends*. Thus in our *worldly Affairs*, how often do we endanger our main Interest, by snatching too greedily at some present Good? We think, if we had it, it would serve such a Purpose, and conduce to such a desired End; but when we have it, it proves a *Mischief* to us, and disappoints us of other *Ends* and *Purposes*, which are of much greater Weight and Moment to us: And, I believe, there is no Man that hath been but a diligent Observer of his own *Affairs*, but hath found by Experience, that many of those *Things* which for such or such *Purposes* he hath earnestly coveted, have prov'd in the main, extremely prejudicial to him; that either *his Health* or *his Estate*, *his Peace* or *his Reputation*, which are the *main Ingredients* of our temporal Welfare, hath hath been very much impair'd by the Acquisition of some of those *Goods* which he most impatiently *longed for*. And how often have we seen Men impoverish'd by those *Pleasures*, disquieted by those *Profits*, made infamous by those *Honours*, and unhealthful by that *Ease* which they have doated on, and pursu'd with the greatest Impatience? So fond are we generally, of our *little particular Ends*, that in the Prosecution of them, we seldom consult our *main Interest*! We consider only, that *this*, or *that* Good, will serve *this*, or *that* Purpose, and so we immediately let fly our *Desires* and *Endeavours* after that, without ever enquiring whether it will not be more prejudicial to us in general, than it can be beneficial in *this* or *that* Particular: In which Case, if we had but our own *Wills*, we should many times ruine *our selves* for *Trifles*, and sacrifice all the *Happiness* of our *Lives* to the present Gratification of some *fond* and *unreasonable* Desire.

But now God in the Conduct and Management of our Affairs, considers our *whole* Case, and hath *all* our Circumstances together in his View, and so cannot but know whether *this* or *that* particular Good be consistent with our Welfare in the general: And whereas we, like Men in a *Fever*, do for our *present* Ease and Refreshment, oftentimes long most impatiently for what is most *hurtful* and *injuriously* to us, God, like a *wise Physician*, consults our *future Health*, more than our *present Ease*; and having an *infallible* Prospect of our *whole* Case and Circumstances, suits all his Prescriptions to the Necessities of our Condition, and not to the blind Impatencies of our Appetites and Longings. He many times plainly sees, that *what* we desire, would be our *Bane*; and therefore out of *tender Mercy*, chuses rather to deny us, than to destroy us. That *Patient* would be accounted very *unreasonable*, that should fall out with his *Physician* for disturbing his Sleep, when he is inclining to a *Lethargy*, or denying him Drink in a *Fever* or a *Dropsie*; because tho' what he desires is *good* for those *particular* Ends of his Ease and Refreshment, yet it is apparently destructive to him in the main. Thus, doubtless, it would have been *very well* for *Joseph*, as to many *particular Ends*, not to have been *sold* by his Brethren, or *imprisoned* in *Egypt*; and doubtless, had it been left to his *own* Option, he would much rather have chosen to continue at home, under the Care and Patronage of an indulgent Father: But had he seen, as God did, from the first Link of the Chain of his Fate, to the last; and how inseparably his *After-Advancement* was connected to his *present Sufferings*, in the Course and Series of Things, he wou'd doubtless, have *willingly* chosen as God did for him; since, tho' the Contrary had been well for him in some Particulars, yet This was much better in the general.

3. We many times know only *this* or *that* to be good for us *singly* or *apart* by it self; but God knows whether it be good for us in conjunction with those *Concomitants* and *Consequents* that in the Course of Things are necessary to it. For the Divine Providence, which runs thro' all things, hath disposed and connected them into such a *Series* and Order, that there is no *single* Event or Accident, (but what is purely *miraculous*) that depends not on the *Whole*, and hath *innumerable Causes* antecedent

tecedent to it, *innumerable Concurrences* going Hand in Hand with it, and *innumerable Consequents* attending it. But so narrow and confin'd is our Prospect of Things, that we only see that Part of their *Series* and Order that is at present before us: And there are *innumerable Things* both concomitant and consequent to every Event, that are out of the Sphere of our Cognizance; by reason of which it is impossible for us to make any *infallible Judgment*, either of the Good or Evil of almost any Event that befalls us; because tho' we may be secure that such an Event, *single* or *apart* by it self, may be *good* or *evil* for us; yet, for all we know, in the whole *Series* of Things there be such *concomitant* or *consequent Events* inseparable to it, as may quite alter its Nature, and render that Evil, which consider'd *singly*, may be Good for us; or that Good, which consider'd *singly*, may be Evil. So that in our Choice of Events, we are necessitated for the most part, to chuse in the Dark; because we see so little of the whole *Series* of Things, and of the *Circumstances* wherewith *Events* are accompanied and attended, that it is not in our Power to determine which is Good or which Bad for us. We many times look on such an Event as highly good for us, and extremely desirous; and believe, that if we should compass it, we should be extremely happy: But, poor, short-sighted Creatures that we are, we see neither the Company, nor the Train of it. If *this* Event doth befall us, according to the *Series* of Things, a *thousand others* must; and what they will prove, we are not able to prognosticate; and for all we know, the Mischief of *them* may abundantly out-weigh the Benefit of *this*; and did we but foresee all that goes along with, and all that must follow it, we should be many times *most* afraid of what we *most* eagerly desire. This therefore being our Case, how extremely unfit are we to make *Choices* for our *selves*; since it is almost an equal Lay, whether what we chuse, will prove our Food or Poison. But God being the supream Orderer and Disposer of Things, must needs have them all together intirely in his View; and having the first Link of the whole Chain of *Causes* in his own Hands, cannot but plainly see all the *intermediate ones* from the Beginning to the End. And since his *Power* is the Cause, not only of all *actual Events*, but even of the Possibility of those that shall never be actual, he must needs discern the *utmost Issues* of every *possible*, as well as *actual Event*, and see the *remotest Effects* and *Consequents* that are in the *Wombs* of all *actual* and *possible Causes* and *Principles*: And having all Things that *are*, or that *may be*, in his View, he doth not only see what is *good* or *hurtful* to us, but what would be so, if it were *actual* and *existing*. So that he needs not try *Experiments* upon us, to know what is *beneficial* or *injurious* to us; because the Operation and Consequence of every *possible Event*, is as *obvious* to his all-comprehending *Knowledge*, *before*, as *after* it is *befallen* us. And hence it is impossible for him to be mistaken in his *Choices*; because he knows as well *beforehand* what Things would *be*, if they were, as what they *are*, when they actually exist. And tho' we may sometimes pervert the Nature of Things by our Abuse of 'em, and make that Evil to us, which is really Good; yet God cannot be mistaken so as to prescribe us for *Physick*, what is in its own Nature *Poison*; and consequently, if he love *us* but as well as we love *our selves*, (as I have demonstrated he doth) he must needs chuse better for *us* than we; because he sees the *utmost Consequents* of all that doth, or can *befall* us; and so cannot be imposed on by *Shews* and *false Appearances*, as we oftentimes are. And of this I shall only give you one Instance; which is that of good old *Jacob*, when he lost his Son *Joseph*; which we plainly see by the *Sorrow* he expressed, as it was an Accident that happened fore against his Will, and which he would have gladly prevented, had he been but aware of it. But it is plain, the good Man saw but a little way into the *Series* of Things; he saw his *Loss*, but he saw not the *Issues* of it: For, doubtless, had he beheld that Train of *happy Consequents* that was chained and annexed to it; how it tended, not only to *Joseph's* Advancement, but to the Preservation of himself and his Family from the ensuing Famine, he would doubtless, have been more a Friend to *himself*, and a Father to *his* Family, than to have countervoted God in his Choice and Election for him. But it was well for *Jacob*, that God saw farther into the *Consequents* of Things than he: For if he had not, not

only *Joseph* had missed of his Preferment ; but *himself* and all *his* Family, had been in a great deal of Danger of *perishing* in the Famine. So that when all is done, you see, the *wisest* Course we can take, is, to *resign* up our selves into the Hands of God ; who seeing the *utmost* Issues and Consequents of Things, can never be mistaken in chusing what is best for us.

4. We many times know only what is *Good* for us with respect to our *present* Temper and Disposition ; but God knows what is *good* for us in Reference to our *constant* and most *abiding* Condition. We are a *Sort* of Creatures that are extremely *fickle* and *mutable* ; our *Humours* change upon every *new* Occasion, and our Desires, like the *Weather-cocks*, look *contrary* Ways upon every *contrary* *Wind* ; now we are of *one* Mind, and *by and by* of *another* ; *this* seems to us *now*, and *anon* the *quite* *contrary* ; and oftentimes in the *same* Hour, we are *several* Sorts of Men. But still we chuse according to our *present* Temper ; and so still as *this* alters, our *latter* Choices thwart and run a *Tilt* at our *former*. So that should every Thing happen to us that we desire and wish for, we should be the most *miserable* Creatures in the World ; since what we chuse in *this* Hour, we should reject in the *next* ; and what we longed for to *Day*, we should be sick of to *Morrow*. And since no Man certainly knows *now*, what Mind he shall be of *anon*, for all that he can tell, *that* which is most agreeable to him *now*, may be most disagreeable to him *then* ; and if he should change his *present* Mind, as it is very likely he may, he will *immediately* unwish what he now wishes for, and *deeply* repent of what he most heartily chuses. How then is it possible, that we should chuse *well* and *wisely* for our selves, ail whose Choices do depend on a Temper that is so everlastingly *fickle* and *variable* ? But now God, who foresees what our most *constant*, *lasting*, and *durable* Temper will be, is much better able to *adapt* Events to it, and to contrive all our Circumstances into a *fair* Accommodation with it ; and tho' it is impossible but he must sometimes cross us, because our *Humours* do so vary, and we do so often cross and contradict our selves ; yet knowing best what our *standing* and *permanent* Temper will be, he must needs know best also, what will be most *constantly* convenient for us and agreeable to us. For if he be *cordially* our Friend, as it is apparent he is, he will not so much consult the Gratification of our *peevish*, *fickle*, and *unconstant* Humours, as of our most *permanent* Temper and Disposition ; and if he know much better than *we*, what our most *permanent* Temper and Disposition will be, as it is apparent he doth, he must needs be much abler to suit and accommodate it with *convenient* Events and Circumstances. Of this you have a *remarkable* Instance in the *Method* of God's conducting *Israel* out of *Egypt* into *Canaan*. Doubtless, had *They* had their own Choice, they would have been *immediately* translated from their *miserable* Bondage, into that *happy* Land : But God knew their *standing* Temper *better* than they did their *own* ; he saw, they were a *stupid*, *stubborn*, and *untractable* People, and as yet *wholly* incapable of such a *propitious* Change ; and that if he had conducted them into *Canaan* *directly*, and in a *Moment*, they would have presently forgot their Benefactor, and let *loose* themselves to all Licentiousness and Wickedness ; which must have naturally shortned their Prosperity, and hastned it into an *untimely* Ruin : And therefore God saw it necessary to continue them some time longer in *Egypt* ; that so by his *mighty* Works *there*, he might awaken their *stupid* Minds into an *awful* Sense of his Majesty and Power. And when by his *outstretched* Arm he had brought them out of *Egypt*, he made them wander about *Forty* Years in the Wilderness : Whereas had he led them *directly* *on*, a very *few* Days Marches would have brought them into *Canaan*. But he consider'd their *stubborn* Temper, which was not yet capable to bear a *prosperous* Condition, till it was thoroughly disciplin'd for it in the *School* of Affliction ; till it was *broken*, and *tamed*, and *civilized*, render'd more tractable and obsequious. And tho' in *thus* Dealing with them, he acted quite contrary to their *present* Humour and Desires ; yet did he act most advantageously for them, considering their *standing* Genius and Temper : For had he transmitted them into *Canaan* with all those *barbarous* Conditions that they brought out of *Egypt*, their Prosperity would have only *heightned* their Insolence, and hastned their Ruin :
And

And accordingly *Duter. 8.* Moses tells them at large, that all God's Severities to them in the *Wilderness*, were to dispose them for the *happy* Condition of *Canaan*; to *prove* and *polish* them, to *break* and *humble* their *untractable* Spirits, and do them *good* in the *latter* End; as you may see *Verf. 2, 3, 5, 16.* And if God chuse to do what is best for us with respect to our *standing* Temper and Disposition, we have no reason to complain, that he *sometimes* crosses our more *fickle* and *variable* Humours and Fancies.

5. And Lastly, We many times know only what is *Good* for us with respect to this *present* State of Things; but God knows what is *good* for us in reference to our *eternal* Condition. For we being a Sort of Creatures that are born to live *for ever*, in *eternal* Weal or Woe, it is really a Matter of very *small* Moment to us, whether we are *happy* or *miserable* here; 'tis no more than a *short* Night's Dream of Pain or Pleasure to a Man that hath *four score* or a *hundred* Years to consume in Delights or Torments: And when we *awake* in *Eternity*, all that is past, will seem a Dream to us in the Presence of those *never-ending* Ages of Joy or Misery before us. But yet so *fond* are we generally, of the *present*, that we most commonly chuse without *any* Regard to the *future*. In our Choice of Objects, we seldom project beyond our *present* Pleasure; if the Thing will but please us *now*, we rarely trouble our Heads to enquire what Influence it may have on our *eternal* Pleasure or Pain; yea, and many times if we should, it would be to no purpose; because in most of those *Goods* we chuse and covet, there are a *thousand* Snares we cannot discern, as well as a *thousand* Advantages which we are not aware of. In those *Evils* and *Calamities* which we run away from, we are not able to *foresee* how many *Ways* our *Souls* may be indanger'd by those *outward* Goods we covet; nor yet how many *spiritual* Blessings those *outward* Evils may be pregnant with, at which we are so startled and affrighted: So that in most of our *Choices*, we can look no farther than our *present* Convenience; but what Effect they may have upon our *everlasting* Fate, we can never certainly know, till the Event hath determin'd it. Thus in this *great Lottery* of *Goods* and *Evils* we short sighted *Creatures* are fain to chuse at a Venture; and till the *Event* hath determin'd what our *Choices* are, we know not whether they are *Blanks* or *Prizes*. So that if we always had what we chuse, God only knows the Mischief that would follow upon it: For to be sure, every Man would be *prosperous*; and if every Man were so, how many *Thousands* would perish *forever*, for want of the *saving* Remedy of Affliction; which is as *indispensibly* necessary to the reclaiming of *some* Persons, and putting them into a Capacity of Happiness, as *Food* is to satisfy our Hunger, or *Nourishment* to sustain our Lives. Lord! what *miserable* Creatures then should we be, shouldst thou be so regardless of us, to allow us our Wills, who having so *small* a Prospect beyond *this* State of Things, should many times, for the sake of a *present* Convenience, chuse what might occasion our *eternal* Woe? But God being our *best* Friend, must needs be supposed to intend our *main* Interest; which being lodg'd in our *eternal* State, he must needs be much more concern'd about, than about our Happiness and Conveniencies in this *present* Condition: Nor indeed, would he be our Friend, should he advance our *present* Interest to the Prejudice of our *Souls*, and *immortal* Concerns. So that if he love us, as we are *most* sure he doth, the *main* Drift and Design of his Providence over us, must be to secure our Happiness in the *World to come*; and when *this* cannot be secur'd, but by the Damage of our *earthly* Enjoyments, it is a Mercy and Kindness to us, to fling that *Lumber* over-board to save our *precious* and *immortal* Freight. But he having a most *perfect* Intuition of the *inmost* Nature and *utmost* Consequents of Things, cannot but discern all those Stops and Turnings where our *temporal* and *eternal* Interest do clash and interfere with one another; and having a *perfect* Insight of all their Competition; where the *one* cannot be advanc'd without the Depression of the *other*, he must needs know *infinitely* better than we, how to prefer our *main* Interest, and to chuse what is best for us. For he knowing *best* what our Temper is, and what the Consequents of things are, cannot be *ignorant* of what is *best* for us, and most *conducive* to our *eternal* Interest; whether *Prosperity* or *Adversity* be *safest* for our *Souls*, and most for

the Security of our *Vertue* and *Innocence* ; and knowing this, he can so accommodate *all* Events to our *spiritual* Necessities. as that they shall *all* work together for our *eternal* Good. And if at any time he sees it *necessary* for our *spiritual* Good, to *instruct* us by Rods, or to *discipline* us by Affliction. it is *infinite* Mercy in him to cross our *blind* Wills, by interrupting our *beloved* Ease and Posterity. And if *we* saw but what *he* sees, when he corrects and chastises us, and knew the Reasons of his Actions, we would doubtless, beseech him to do as he doth ; and whilst we were *smarting* under his Lashes, we should be *adoring* his Goodness for making such *wise* Provision for our Welfare. Thus, when *David* was hunted, like a *Partridge* on the Mountains, by those *successive* Afflictions which God let fly at him, he doubtless, concluded himself to be very severely dealt with ; and would God but have allow'd him to chuse his *own* Fate, he would much rather have chosen to have liv'd in an *uninterrupted* Calm of Prosperity, than to be exposed, as he was, to the *incessant* Storms of an *adverse* Fortune. But when Experience had better instructed him what were the Reason of God's Actions, how necessary they were to *correct* his Follies, and *curb* the Extravagancies of his Nature ; he was then plainly convinc'd, that God had dealt much better by him, than he would have dealt by himself ; and was forc'd to acknowledge, that it was *well* for him that he was afflicted ; *For before I was afflicted, saith he, I went astray ; But now have I kept thy Commandments,* Psal. 119. 67.

So that by all these Instances you plainly see, that God can chuse much *better* for us, than *we* for our selves ; and therefore, if to *this* you add, what hath been so largely prov'd, that *he* is as *heartily* our Friend as *we* can be our *own*, it will from hence *necessarily* follow, that it is much *better* for us, that *his* Will concerning us, would take Effect, than any *contrary* Will or Desire of *our own*.

What then remains, but that with all Chearfulness and Alacrity we resign up our selves into the Hands of God, and submit *all* our Choices and Desires to his *heavenly* Will ; *who* having as *unfeigned* an Affection for us, as we can have for our selves, and much *better* Prospect of our Affairs, than *we* ; must needs manage our Concerns to much *greater* Advantage than it is possible for us to do. Why then should *we* murmur and repine at any thing that befalls *us* ? Are *we* *wiser* than God ? No ; or can *we* pretend to be *more* careful of our *Interest* than he is ? Neither. In the Name of *Goodness*, what would *we* be at then ? Would *we* have him resign up our Concerns to our *selves*, and not intermeddle any farther in our Affairs ? God forbid, that either *he* should have so *little* Regard of *us*, or that *we* should be such Traytors to our *own* Interest. For on this side *Hell*, I know nothing more *formidable*, than for God to let *us* alone, and give *us* up to our own *Wills* and *Desires*. And if I should hear him thus bespeaking me from the *Battlements* of Heaven, *O foolish Creature, since what I do, will not please thee, and thou art so dissatisfied with my Conduct and Management, from henceforth I will cross thy Desires no more ; but let the Event prove good or bad, I will comply with thy Choices, and order all things to happen to thee, according to thy own Will ;* I think, I should look on my self as the most *forlorn* and *abandoned* Wretch on this side *Hell* ; as one utterly excluded from the *greatest* Blessing that belongs to a Creature ; and if I had any Hope of his Re-acceptance, I would on my *bended* *Knees* resign *back* my self, and *all* that concerns me, into his Hands again. I would beseech him, above *all* things, not to leave me to my *self* ; not to *throw* me from *his* Care, or *discharge* me from *his* Conduct ; and if I could prevail with him to take me *again* into *his* Care and Protection, I would promise *never* to repine against him more ; but *cheerfully* submit to his *heavenly* Will, how severely soever he should think good to deal with me. And this, not only I, but every Man else would do, that truly loves *himself*, and understands his own Interest : For *where* can our Concerns be *better* or *safer* lodged, than in the Hands of that *infinite* Wisdom, that knows what is *best* for us ; and that *infinite* Goodness, that wills what it knows *best* ; and of that *infinite* Power that doth what it wills ; Why then should any Man be displeased, that his Affairs are not managed his *own* way, when *we* are so sure of *this*, that they are managed by One that hath much *more* Skill to manage them than *we* ; and One that

that having the same Love for us, that we have for our selves, will be sure to manage them to the best Advantage? And since there is the same *Benevolence* towards us in *God's Will*, that there is in *ours* towards *our selves*, how much better is it for us, that *his* should take Effect, that is guided by such an *infallible* Wisdom, than *ours*, that hath nothing to conduct and steer it, but a *blind* Sense, or, at best, a *short-sighted* Reason? Wherefore tho' *our* Affairs go never so contrary to our Wills in *this* present State of *Things*; yet this we may build upon, that 'tis best that Things should be as God will have them. And, as when we are *grown up* to the Age of Men, we thank our Parents for those *loving Severities* they exercis'd towards us when we were Children, and not able to govern *our selves*; because *then* we see, that if they had let us had our *Childish Wills*, and given the Reins to our *wild Passions* and *Appetites*, we should, in all Probability, have undone our selves: So when we come to our *full Stature* in Christ, and are *grown up* into a State of Perfection, then we shall see Reason to admire and praise the Goodness of God for those *merciful Denials* and *kind Severities*, upon the account of which we *now* murmur and repine against him; and be fully convinc'd, that it was happy for us, that we were not suffer'd to be our own Carvers; but had all our *Allowances* carved out to us by the Wise and Gracious Providence of our Heavenly Father. Whensoever therefore we are crossed by his Providence in any of our Desires, let us but consider, how *unfeignedly* he loves us, and how much more fit he is to chuse for us than *we*; and then we shall see infinite Reason to acquiesce in his Providence, and to joyn with our Saviour in this Excellent Prayer, *Father, not our Wills, but thy Will be done.*

DISCOURSE VII.

UPON

MATTHEW xvi. 24.

Then said Jesus to his Disciples, if any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me.

IN the 21st Verse our Saviour declares to his Disciples, that it was necessary for him to go up to Jerusalem, and there to suffer many things, and to be killed, and be raised again the third Day. Upon which, St. Peter rebukes him V. 22. saying, *Be it far from thee; or, as it may be render'd, Be propitious to thy self; this shall not be unto thee.* But Jesus considering, this was the Work he came into the World for, tartly rebukes him, *get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an Offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of Men; i. e. thou talkest, as if thou didst not yet understand what God hath foretold of me, viz. that I shall be advanced to my Kingdom by my Sufferings; and as if thou wert merely guided by Rules of Human Policy; according to which, to expose ones self to Calamities and Death, is a very odd Way to Glory and Empire.* But I tell thee, Peter, that it is not only certain that I must suffer, in order to my Advancement; but that those also that will come after me, must deny themselves, and take up their Cross and follow me. In the Management of which Words, I shall endeavour these Three Things:

1. To shew you what is here meant by *denying our selves.*
2. What abundant Cause and Reason there is for it.
3. How absolutely necessary it is to our Eternal Happiness.

1. What is here meant by *denying our selves.* In general, by *our selves* here we are not to understand our Nature, consider'd as it is the Creature and Workmanship of God: For God hath endowed us with *Rational Faculties*, and stamped *Immutable Principles* of Reason upon our *Minds*; which Principles we are so far from being obliged to renounce, that they are the *Fundamental Laws* of our Nature, by which we ought to regulate all our *Motions* and *Actions*. By *our selves* therefore, we are to understand *our sinful selves*, or our *corrupt Nature*, as it is under the Power and Dominion of *wicked Principles* and *Inclinations*: For so *our selves* doth in Scripture many times denote *our sinful and corrupt selves*. And so 2 Tim. 3. 2. 'tis made a Character of Bad Men, that *they should be Lovers of their own selves*: Whereas in Strictness, to love our selves, is so far from being a Fault, that it is a necessary Instinct of Nature, and the Root and Principle of our Vertue. By loving *our own selves*, therefore, must be here meant, being indulgent to the *vicious Inclinations* of our Nature, as he explains himself in the following Words, *being Covetous, Boasters, Proud, Blasphemers, &c.* And accordingly, Christ is said to have died for all, that *they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, i. e. to their corrupt Principles and Inclinations; but unto him which died for them,* 2 Cor. 5. 15. By *our selves* therefore, here, we are to understand every thing in

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us that is opposite to God, every Motion and Inclination of *our* Nature that stands in competition with *his* Will, and doth any way contend with his Authority. For the *Soul* of Man is a Throne, to which, God and its *corrupt* Nature are Rivals; God claims it by a *natural* and *essential* Right, as he is the *Sovereign* of Beings, and *Lord* of the Creation: *Corrupt* Nature claims it, without any *Pretence* of Right; but like a *base* Usurper, *derives* its Property from its Possession, and *will* rule, because it will, and because it hath not Strength and Interest enough to support its Dominion. So that to deny *our* selves, is to renounce our *corrupt* Nature, and to refuse to be govern'd by it, and wholly to resign up our selves to the Government of God; to abandon the *various* Inclinations which are God's Competitors in us, and would *contend* for his Dominion. In a Word, to deny *our* selves, is to give *our* selves up to God; to put all our Powers of Action out of *our* own Power, and not suffer any Desire or Inclination of *our* own to take Part, or prevail against his Authority. And therefore as they are said to *deny* *our* selves, who *deny* his Authority, in Compliance with the *corrupt* Inclinations of *our* Nature, *Ps. l. 16.* so they may be truly said to *deny* *our* selves, who *deny* *our* selves, in Compliance with the Will of God. To *deny* *our* selves, is to prefer God's Will before *our* own, to *forget* *our* Inclinations to *our* Duty, and in *all* Competitions between him and *our* *corrupt* Inclinations and Affections, to take *his* Part, and *submit* *our* selves to his Dominion.

1. *Second Thing* proposed, which is, to shew you, what a *benefit* there is in *this* Duty; and that will evidently appear, if we consider *how* much more advantageous it is in all respects for Men to be ruled by God, than by themselves; to follow *his* Will, and comply with *his* Pleasure, rather than give up *our* selves to the Government of his Rival, *viz.* the *Appetites* and *Inclinations* of *our* own *corrupt* Nature; which will evidently appear in the following Particulars:

1. By thus denying *our* own Will in Compliance with the Will of God, we shall *chuse* and *act* with much more *Ease* and *Freedom*.

2. We shall *chuse* and *act* with much more *Evenness* and *Consistency*.

3. We shall *chuse* and *act* with much more *Peace* and *Satisfaction*.

4. We shall *chuse* and *act* with much more *Prudence* and *Conduct*.

5. We shall *chuse* and *act* with much more *Security* of the *Event*.

1. By denying *our* own Will to comply with God's, we shall *chuse* and *act* with much more *Ease* and *Freedom*. He that makes *his* own Will his Law, is upon every new Occasion, put upon new Deliberations; and upon every Change of Circumstances, is fain to change his Will, and to consult new Choices and Resolutions; in debating of which, he is commonly so *max'd* and *bewilder'd* with *cross* Thoughts and *opposite* Counsels and Deliberations, that he hardly knows which way to determine himself; is *thus* at a loss, what to resolve upon, than how to execute his Resolution. And being thus *clogg'd* and *incumber'd* in the whole Course of his Motion, how is it possible he should *act* with any *Ease* and *Freedom*? But now when once a Man had renounc'd *his* own Will, and intirely submitted himself to the Direction of God's, he is free from this Toil and Incumbrance. For the Will of God, as to all the *material* Parts of our Duty, is so plainly revealed, that an *honest* Mind with *little* Enquiry; may be soon informed, and satisfied about it; and when once it is so, all its Choices are already determin'd, so far as they are concern'd in the Matter of its Duty: For God's Will being *his*, he no sooner knows *that*, but he rests in it immediately with a *free* Assent, and *uncontrouled* Approbation; and whatsoever the *Event* be, he is fix'd to one steady Course of Motion; being resolved *once* for all, whatever happens, to do as God would have him. So that when once a Man hath intirely denied *himself*, and put himself out of *his* own Disposal, into God's, God *chuses* for him, and thereby frees him from all the Trouble of doubting, and deliberating, and disputing *pro* and *con*; of be-
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ness of his Actions, or *his* Conscience will be alarming him with the Vengeance that is due to them.

But when once a Man hath *thoroughly* denied *his own* Will and Affections, and intirely resign'd up himself to the Government of *God*, he will be able to produce *God's own* Will and Command for the Warrant of his *Choices* and *Actions*; and this will effectually discharge him at the *Tribunals* of *his* Reason and Conscience. For *why* should our Reason shame, or our Conscience terrifie us, so long as we chuse and act in Subordination to *God*? For so long as we do *thus*, our Will and Actions are *his*; and being cloath'd in the *Livery* of *his* Authority, are thereby sufficiently protected both from *Shame* and *Fear*. For *why* should I be ashamed to do as *God* wills me, whose Will is so intirely *righteous* and *good*, that I am sure, it can never be displeasing to *his* Nature? Whilst therefore I *chuse* and *act* in Submission to *God*, what should hinder me from being as *courageous* as Truth, and as *confident* as Innocence it self? For so long my Conscience must not only *acquit* me, but *reverence* me. So that *now* my Soul, which *heretofore* lived in *Thunders*, and *Lightnings*, and *Storms*, will dwell *above* in a *serene* Aether, and there *breathe* nothing but *calm* and *gentle* Thoughts; and instead of those *uneasie* Reflections that were wont to disturb my *pleasant* Scenes of Mirth, I shall be continually entertain'd with the *silent* Melodies of a *clear* Conscience, and crown'd with the Applauses of *my own* Mind.

4. By denying *our own* Will to comply with *God's*, we shall chuse and act with much more Prudence and Conduct. Did we understand either *God* or *our selves*, we could not but be sensible, that it is much more for *our* Interest to be governed by *his* Will, than by *our own*: For tho' there is no doubt, but we wish *well* to our selves, and would not *wilfully* prejudice *our own* Interest; yet it is to be consider'd, that there is the *same* Benevolence towards us in *God's* Will: Besides which, *God's* Will hath an *infinite* Wisdom to steer by, which sees through all the Intrigues of our Interest, and hath an *intire* Prospect of whatsoever can *hinder* or *advance* it. Whereas *our* Wills are generally guided either by a *blind* Sense, or by a *short sighted* Reason that many times mistakes our Interest, and directs us to *Rocks* instead of *Harbours*. And when the Disadvantage on *this* side is so *great* and *apparent*, how can we imagine our selves so *safe* under the Government of *our own* Wills, as we are under the Government of *God's*? He would have us do *this*; and we would do the *quite contrary*; and yet we acknowledge *his* Will is as *kind* and *benign* to us, as *ours* is to *our selves*. Why then, which of the *Two* Wills do we think is the *Wiseest*? *God's*, sure, we will all acknowledge. Well then, is it not much *safer* for us to take the *Sun* for our Guide, than to *grope* by the *twinkling* Light of a *Glow-worm*? While we follow *our own* Will, every Step, for all we know, may plunge us into *Bogs* and *Quagmires*; but while we follow *God's*, we chuse as wisely for *our selves*, as an *infinite* Wisdom can direct us. So that what *our* Will chuses, may be good for us; but what *his* Will chuses, must be so; and therefore, to be sure, when ever we *chuse* contrary to *him*, we chuse against *our own* Interest. I am as confident of this, as of any *Principle* in Nature and Religion, that whatsoever *God* commands me to do, he must certainly know that it is for my *Good*, and that is the Reason why he commands it; and if it be, then this I am equally sure of, that whensoever I act contrary to *his* Command, I run from a *certain* Benefit, to a *certain* Mischief. But while I *submit* my Will to *God's*, I am guided by *God's* Wisdom; and in every *genuine* Act of Obedience, I am as *infallible* as *Omni-science* it self. Whilst therefore I am in the *Exercise* of my Duty, I am sure, I am *safe*; because I am under the Direction of a Will that can never be *mis-led*, and so can never *mis-lead* me. And had any Thing he commanded, been hurtful to me, I know, he is so *good*, that he would never have enjoyned it; yea, had any Thing been but *indifferent* to me, I know, he is so *wise*, that he would never have concern'd himself or me, about it. And if he hath commanded me nothing that is either *hurtful* or *indifferent* to me, it is doubtless, *richly* worth my while to obey him even in the *smallest* and most *inconsiderable* Instances.

What a mighty Advantage therefore have those happy Persons who have entirely renounc'd *their own Wills*, and submitted themselves to *God's*? For whilst others, *poor Wretches*! do grope about, under the Conduct of their own Blind *Wills*, and do they know not *what*, and go they know not *whither* themselves, but live by Chance, and act at Random; they are conducted in all their *Choices* and *Actions* by an all wise Will, that never fails to measure their *Actions* by the *best* Rules, and point them to the *best* Ends. So that while they move by the Directions of that Heavenly Guide, they are sure of their Ends, and do know infallibly beforehand, that all their *Choices* and *Actions* shall finally conspire in their own Happiness.

5. And Lastly, By denying our own Wills, to comply with *God's*, we shall chuse and act with much more Security of the Event. One of the great Causes why Mens Minds are so Unquiet and Anxious, is, that they are not able to discover the Events of their own *Designs* and *Actions*; and it is *this* that makes them so Doubtful and Tremulous in their *Motions*, and causes them to act with so much Caution and Anxiety; because they are not able to pry into those hidden *Events* that lurk in the Womb of their *Designs*. Now while Men give up themselves to follow the Inclinations of their own corrupt Nature, they cannot but be fearful of the ill Consequents; especially, when they consider, that the *Consequents* of their *Actions* are in the Hands of God, against whom they are in Rebellion. For our Understanding being our leading Faculty, and the Eye that is to direct our Practice; it is impossible, that whilst That doth either disapprove or doubt our *Actions*, we should ever be able to act with Steadiness and Assurance: For while a Man acts with a misgiving Mind; and that which should be the Guide of his *Actions*, is dissatisfied with his Way; he walks like a benighted Traveller in a dangerous Road; and is fain to feel out his Steps, and tread cautiously, lest he should stumble into a Bog, or a Precipice. Whilst therefore a Man knows, that his *Actions* are displeasing to God, and considers, that the Events of them are in *God's* Hands; he must be very unreasonable, if he expect to be blessed and prosper'd in them; he must either conclude, that *God's* Displeasure is nothing but a dead and ineffectual Passion; or that his way of expressing it, is by *Smiles* and *Endearments*. So that whilst we take part with our Corrupt Nature, against God, we can never have any Rational Security of the *Events* of our *Actions*; but must see abundant Cause, if we do not wilfully shut our Eyes, to be afraid of every thing that happens to us; because nothing can happen to us, but by *his* Disposal, whom we daily incense and provoke.

But now, he who hath sincerely resigned up himself to God, knows enough of the *Events* of *his own* *Actions*, to set his Heart at Rest, and keep his Mind in a quiet Enjoyment of it self: For he acts with the full Consent and Approbation of his Mind, and hath no By-Ways from the Road of his Reason and Conscience; but keeping straight-forwards, as he doth, in the plain Tracts of Eternal Goodness, he treads firmly and boldly, being secure of the Ground he goes upon, and is neither ashamed nor afraid of *his own* *Actions*; which being such as his best and purest Reason approves, have the cheerful *Euge's* and *Applauses* of his Conscience continually echoing and resounding after them. And when a Man is well satisfied that his Ways are pleasing to God, he may cheerfully expect, that the End and Events of them will be *blessed* and *prosperous*; he may build upon it, that God will first or last *express* the Pleasure he takes in *his* *Actions*, by crowning them with a *happy Success*; and that how grievous soever any present Event of his *righteous Actions* may be, yet there is a great deal of *Righteousness* in it; because it proceeds from the Righteous Lord, who *loveth Righteousness*; and that in the winding up of the Bottom, that which *now* seems most grievous, will be found most beneficial to him. For suppose I have an infallible Physician, whom I know to be my Friend, constantly attending on me, and ordering my Diet, my Physick and my Exercise; how securely should I live, and how cheerfully should I follow all his Rules and Prescriptions! Should he order me a coarse or a distasteful Diet, I should thus conclude with my self: Well; I am sure, this is for my Health; and how nau-
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seous soever it be at present, I know, I shall be the better for it as long as I live; and this would render it very *grateful* and *palatable*. Should he prescribe a strong and painful Purgative, I should thus conclude; Well, this is to remove or prevent a Disease that will be much more *painful* than *all* the present Gripes and Twinges it gives me; and I am sure, it will have its Effect, and set me perfectly at Ease within a very few Moments; and this Consideration would turn my *Pain* into *Pleasure*. In a Word, should he impose upon me a *toilsome* and *laborious* Exercise, I should resolve thus within my self; Well, tho' I stretch and sweat for it *now*, I shall certainly be the better for it *anon*, and reap many Years Health and Vigour from my present Toil and Weariness; and this Reflection would convert a Drudgery into a Recreation. And yet this is the real Case of those Men, who have intirely deny'd their own *Wills*, to chuse and act in Subordination to God: For he is an *infallible* Physician; and they have made him their Friend, by submitting themselves to him, and putting their Lives and Interests in his Hands: And therefore, since as he is God, and their *Friend*, he cannot but know, and design what is good for them; they have all the Security in the World, that every thing he orders them, shall conduce to their *good*, so long as they follow his Prescriptions; and that he will order them nothing, but what they would order for themselves, if they were but as *infallible* as he is, and did *fully* comprehend *all* his Reason; and in a Word, that tho' this or that Event may be for the present very *troublesome* in its Operations; yet, if they do not hinder the Effect of it by their own Irregularity, it shall certainly conduce to their *everlasting* Health and Happiness. And under *this* Persuasion, how chearfully may a Man bear up under all Events, and *welcome* the worst that can happen to him: For being secure of the *Infallibility* of God's *Skill*, and of the *Sincerity* of his *Kindness* to him, he hath abundant Reason to conclude, that since *all* Events are under God's Disposal, he will take *effectual* Care, that nothing *shall* happen to him, but what is for his *good*. For while his *Will* is subject to God's, his Condition is a thousand times more safe and secure, than if God's *Will* were subject to his; because tho' there be the same *Benevolence* to him in both, yet his *Will* might mis-lead God's, but God's *Will* cannot mis-lead his.

And thus I have endeavoured to represent to you the *abundant* Advantages that do arise from *Self-denial*, *i. e.* from renouncing *our own* corrupt *Will* and *Inclination*, and intirely submitting *our selves* to the *Will* of God; which are such, one would think, should prevail with any Man that doth but love *himself*, and sincerely respect his own Interest. For this is a certain Truth, and as much confirmed by Experience, as any Maxim in Philosophy, that there is no State in Human Life in which a Man can be happy, whilst his own corrupt *Will* is his Law; nor none in which he can be miserable, whilst he is intirely resigned and devoted to the *Will* of God.

3. I now proceed to the third and last Thing proposed; which was, to shew you how absolutely necessary it is to our *eternal* Happiness, that in Obedience to God, we should deny *our own Will* and corrupt *Inclinations*; and this will *evidently* appear, if we consider,

1. That the *Disposal* of our Happiness is not in our own *Will*, but God's.
2. That the *Standard* of our Perfection is not our own *Will*, but God's.
3. That the Conformity of our Nature to our Happiness, consists not in what we *will*, but in what God *wills*.
4. That the *essential* Acts and Ingredients of our Happiness, are not what we *will*, but what God *wills*.

1. That the Disposal of our Happiness is not in *our own Will*, but in God's. If we would be *everlastingly* happy, we must comply with that *blessed Will* upon which our *everlasting* Happiness depends; and the Apostle assures us, that *eternal Life is the Gift of God*. If it were in our Power to support and defend our selves in a blissful Existence to all Eternity, we might with some Confidence set up for

independent Free-willers, and live as we list; and after we have follow'd the Swing of our own corrupt *Inclinations* in this World, promise to our *selves* an Eternity of Happiness in the *other*. But alas, we are a sort of poor precarious Beings, that are beholden to God for every Breath we draw, and for every Moment of our Existence and Duration; and if he should *withdraw* from us the vital Influence of his Providence, but for the *Twinkling* of an Eye, we shou'd be so far from continuing happy, that we shou'd vanish into nothing. And therefore if we intend to be happy for ever, it is necessary we shou'd submit our selves to his *Will*, upon whom every Moment of our Being depends. For when merely by withdrawing his Arm from us, he can let us drop into nothing when he pleases; how can we hope, when we will not be rul'd by him, to be upheld by him in a happy Being for ever? Can we think, that the Wise and Holy Governour of the World will be so *regardless* of his own Authority, as to *sustain* and *uphold* his Subjects in their *Rebellions* against him, unless it be with a Design to reduce them, or to make them everlasting Monuments of his Vengeance? No, no; since our *Being* and *Well being* doth for ever depend upon him; we may build upon it, that either he *will* be obey'd by us, or that he *will not* so uphold us, as to encourage us in our *Rebellion*; and consequently, that if he doth uphold us for ever, as he hath declared he *will*, it will be with a *dreadful* Purpose, *viz.* to continue us in an *everlasting ill Being*, and hang us up in Chains for *publick Spectacles* of his Vengeance, that all his Creation may take Warning by us. Wherefore if we are resolved to adhere to our *own Will*, in Opposition to God's, it is in vain for us to aspire after a happy Being hereafter, unless we can find some Way to deprive God of the Disposal of it, and secure it in our own Power. For so long as God remains the *sole* Arbittor of our Fate, we must make his *Will* ours, or renounce *all* our Hopes of Happiness.

2. It is to be considered, that the Standard of our Perfection is not our own *Wills*, but God's. For the Faculties of every Nature being the Senses by which it perceives and enjoys its own Happiness, it is impossible we shou'd ever enjoy a perfect Happiness, so long as the Faculties by which we are to enjoy it, are imperfect. Ours therefore being a Rational Nature, *all* whose Motions are under the Direction of an Understanding, and the Command of a *free Will*, is framed and designed for a *rational* Happiness; which it is as impossible for us *perfectly* to enjoy, whilst our *rational Faculties* are out of order, as it is to perceive the Pleasures of *delicious* Meats, and Sounds, and Odours, whilst the Sensories of our Taste, and Smell, and Hearing are discomposed and obstructed by any bodily Disorder. But now, while we *follow* our own Will in contradistinction to God's, our Rational Nature is all over out of Tune: For whereas according to the true Order and Constitution of our Nature, our Understanding is to guide our Will, and our Will to command *all* our Passions and Appetites; so far forth as our Will swerves and deflects from God's, it goes quite counter to the Principles of its own Reason and Understanding, and subjects it self to the Dominion of those Passions and Appetites which it ought to command; it chuses and refuses by the Inclination of its Affections, and not by the Direction of its Reason and Conscience: Which is the reason of that Civil War there is between the Law of its Mind and the Law of its Members; that is, between its Reason and Conscience, and its corrupt Lusts and Inclinations; because while its Will takes part against God, it sides with its Lust against its Reason; and whilst it doth so, it will be so far from being happy, that it will be *continually* at War with it self, and its Will and its Conscience will be *perpetually* clashing with one another. For so long as a Man goes against his Reason, his Reason must necessarily go against him, and be *continually* reproaching and upbraiding him, and vexing his Mind with severe and angry Reflections. And how can a Man enjoy himself, whilst he is *thus* divided? Or how can he enjoy the Happiness of a Rational Nature, whilst he is *thus* divided from his Reason, and lives in perpetual Variance with it? A Body may as soon be at Ease whilst its Bones are out of Joint, as a Soul, whilst its Faculties are *thus* broken and divided. If ever we wou'd be Happy with our Reason about us, we must be all of a Piece with our Reason; that is, our Will must be *rational*, our Affections must

must be *rational*, our Actions must be *rational*; if they are *not*, our Reason will be as much against *them*, as they are against *it*; and so there will be an *everlasting* Broil and Mutiny within us.

Till therefore we are *throughout* perfectly *rational*; that is, till *all* our Faculties are intirely *compliant* to our Reason, it is impossible, we can *ever* be perfectly *happy*: And tho' we had Power enough to defend our selves from all *hurtful* Impressions from *without*, and to ward off the Blows not only of *Devils* and *Men*, but even of *God* himself; yet so long as *our* Reason and *our* Will are at Variance, our Will will be a *spightful* Devil to us, and our Reason an *angry* God. So that while we are *imperfect*, you see, we cannot be *happy*; and while we follow *our own* Will against God, we cannot be perfect. For to follow *God* and *Right Reason*, saith the Philosopher, is the same thing; and to present *our selves*, saith a far greater Author, a *living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God*, is our *reasonable Service*, Rom. 12. 1. For the Will of *God* being invariably *determined* in *all* its Choices and Refusals, by the *infinite* Wisdom and Goodness of his Nature, must be the most perfectly *rational* Will in the World; and as *such*, the Standard and Pattern of all other Wills: And therefore so far as *our* Will doth deflect from *his*, it must necessarily be imperfect and irrational: But while I govern *my* Will by *his*, and do *chuse* and *refuse* by *his* Commands and Prohibitions, I follow the Pattern of my Perfection; and while I follow *his* Will, which is a most perfect Transcript of *his* Nature, I transcribe *his* Perfections into *my own*. For while I am *copying* his Will, I am *imitating* his Nature; and while I am *imitating* his Nature, I am *growing* into his Likeness and Resemblance: And when once my Will is all *godlike*, and its *Affections* and *Inclinations* are perfectly *conformable* to *God's*, then I am perfectly *rational*, and then shall be perfectly *happy*. For now as I resemble *God* in his Perfections, I shall resemble *him* in *his* Self enjoyment; my Reason will be perfectly *satisfied* with my Will, even as *God's* Reason is with *his*; and my Nature will be a *fair* and *beautiful* Prospect to my Understanding, even as *God's* Nature is to *his*. I shall contemplate *my own* Graces with a *transcendent* Pleasure and Delight; and while I *alternately* turn my Eyes upon *God* and *my self*, and compare *Grace* with *Grace*, and *Beauty* with *Beauty*, I shall feel, as he doth, a *Heaven* of Content and Joy springing up in my Bosom. Thus by denying *our own* Will, you see, and submitting to *God's*, which is the *Standard* of *our* Perfection, we naturally grow up into *Blessedness*: Whereas by following *our own* Wills in Opposition to *God's*, we fatally sink *our selves* into *Wretchedness* and *Misery*.

3. It is also to be consider'd, that the Conformity of our Nature to our Happiness, consists not in what *we will*, but in what *God wills*. To make us *blessed*, it is not only *necessary* that there should be *blissful* Objects for us to enjoy; but that our Minds should *agree* with, and be *contempered* to them: For unless we are affected suitable to the *Worth* and *Excellency* of them, all the Objects of *Heaven* cannot make us *happy*. For as *Delicacies* are *grateful* only to *delicate* Palates, and *Musick* to *musical* Ears; so the *glorious* Entertainments of the *World to come*, are a *Heaven* only to *heavenly* Minds: For to dwell with a *God*, whom I do not love, and to be confined to a *Society* of *Spirits*, whose Tempers I am *averse* to; to be put upon Exercises, against which I have an *Antipathy*, would be a *tedious* Constraint, instead of a *free* Enjoyment: So that before ever *Heaven* can be a *Heaven* to *me*, my Mind must be *tuned* and *adapted* to its Joys and *Beatitudes*. And this is not to be effected by following *our own* Will, but *God's*: For *our* Will, as it stands in Opposition to *God's*, is either a *sensual*, or a *devilish* one, or both; and 'tis either *Covetousness* or *Luxury*, which are the *Lusts* of the *Flesh*, or *Pride*, or *Malice*, which are the *Lusts* of the *Spirit*, that sway and determine it in all its Choices and Refusals; both which are as repugnant to the *heavenly* Enjoyments, as *Light* is to *Darkness*, or *one* contrary to *another*. For between a *spiritual* *Heaven* and a *carnal* *Mind*, a *divine* *Heaven* and a *devilish* *Mind*, there is an *irreconcilable* Distance; and for *such a* *Mind* to live happily upon *such a* *Heaven*, is as impossible in the Nature of the Thing, as it is for a *hungry* *Wolf* to fill his Belly with *Syllables*.

gisms, or to satisfy its Appetite upon a Lecture of *Philosophy*. Whilst therefore we give way to our corrupt Will and Inclination, we do contract an *Antipathy* to *Heaven*, and do what in us lies to prepossess our own Minds with an *implacable Aversion* to all its Joys and *Beatitudes*. We take an effectual Course to *antidote* our Souls against true Happiness, and to secure our Minds from being ever touch'd and affected with the *divine* and *spiritual* Pleasures of the *World to come*. So that if we are still resolved to take part with our own wicked Will against God, we were best take our Pleasure while we may have it, while we live among these *sensitive* Enjoyments that suit with our *brutish* Appetites and Affections: For when we go hence into the *Spiritual World*, that will be like a *barren* Wilderness to us, where we shall find nothing to live upon; but be forced to pine away a *long* Eternity, under a *desperate* Hunger and Dissatisfaction. But if we heartily resign up our selves to God, and prostrate our Wills to his, we shall thereby quickly acquire a *heavenly* Frame and Disposition. For the proper Business of all those Duties he requires at our hands, is to dress and prepare our Souls for *Heaven*, and make us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. 'Tis by these that he carves and polishes our Natures, cuts off the *Roughnesses* and *Unevennesses* of our Temper, and squares us into fit Materials for the *heavenly* Building. For this is the Will of God, saith the Apostle, even our Sanctification, 1 Thess. 4. 3. That is, the purging our Nature from all its *Aversion* and *Repugnancy* to the Blessedness of *Heaven*, and the inlaying it with all those *divine* Dispositions wherein our Conformity with *Heaven* consists: For so our Saviour explains it, Jo. 12. 50. I know that his Commandment is Life everlasting; that is, that what he commands, is the Seed and Principle of everlasting Blessedness; That it is the *Charity* and *Humility*, the *Righteousness* and *Temperance*, and *Self-resignation*, which he commands, which do temper our Minds to the *heavenly* State, and by which we are to relish the Joys and Pleasures of it for ever. For it is these *Vertues* that do reconcile our Appetites to *Heaven*; and without these, our Souls can no more relish the Joys of it, than our Palate can Sweet-meats while it is overflowed with Gall. Unless therefore we will deny our corrupt Will and Affections, and submit our selves to God, it is Nonsense for us to talk of going to *Heaven*: For *Heaven* it self, without a *heavenly* Disposition to relish it, is a *tasteless* and *insipid* Thing; and it is as possible to please a *blind* Man with the Beauty of Colours, and a *deaf* Man with a *Consort of Musick*, as to gratify a *vicious* Mind with its *divine* and *spiritual* Enjoyments.

4. And Lastly, It is to be considered, that the *essential* Acts and Ingredients of our Happiness are not what we will, but what God Wills. It is a great Mistake, to imagine, that the Happiness of Man consists in *external* Possessions, or in being seized of a great Plenty of *outward Goods*, of any kind whatsoever; whether they be *earthly* or *heavenly*. It is not possessing the *outward Goods* of this *World*, but the enjoying them, that makes any Man happy: And if I had all the World in my Possession, no more of it could go into my Happiness, than just what I enjoy; all the rest would be like the Possession of a great Mountain of Sand which I could neither eat, nor drink, nor apply to any of my Needs or Conveniencies: So that the Possession of *outward Goods*, is good only, as it is in Order to the Enjoyment of them; abstracted from which, it is altogether *indifferent* whether I am possessed of 'em or no. But now 'tis by our own Actions that we do enjoy the Goods we are possess'd of, by applying 'em to the Needs and Conveniencies of our Nature, and by the Content and Satisfaction we take in the Application. So that in short, our Happiness is not in the Goods that are without us, but in the Enjoyment of them that is within us; that is, in those Acts of Fruition, by which we feel, and perceive them. And thus, if we were possessed of all those *outward Goods* that *Heaven* abounds with, they could signify nothing to our Happiness, unless we had an *inward* Enjoyment of them; and by proper Acts of Fruition, did taste and perceive their Beauty and Delightfulness. So that all the Happiness, you see, that *Heaven* or *Earth* can afford us, is immediately lodged in our own Acts of Enjoyment; without which, neither the Possession of *Wealth* and *Honour* upon *Earth*,

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nor of the *Presence of God, and Saints, and Angels in Heaven* can make us in the least degree happy. Since therefore *our Happiness is so immediately lodg'd in our own Acts*, it will hence necessarily follow, that *those Acts by which the Goods of Heaven are to be enjoyed*, are the Acts of our *future Happiness*. Now the *chiefest Goods of Heaven*, being *God, and Saints, and Angels, and our Selves*; the *chiefest Happiness of Heaven* must consist in those Acts, by which *God, and Saints, and Angels, and our Selves* are enjoyed: And by what Acts can these be enjoyed; but by *Godly, Saintly, and Angelical Ones*? 'Tis by *Worship and Contemplation*, by *Love and Imitation*, by *Dependance and Subjection*, that *God* is to be enjoyed by us; 'tis by *Charity and Righteousness*, by *Modesty and Peaceableness*, by *Submission and Condescension*, that *Saints and Angels* are to be enjoyed by us; 'tis by *Prudence and Moderation*, by *Fortitude, Temperance, and Humility*, that *We our selves* are to be enjoyed by us; and therefore if when we go into *Eternity*, we carry with us a *Mind and Will* habituated to these *beatifick Actions*, these Acts are the *Sum and Substance of God's Will and Law*. Whilst therefore we take Part with *our own Will* against *God's*, we act quite counter to *our own Happiness*, and go contrary to all the Acts of our *heavenly Fruition and Enjoyment*. For that which *God* designs in all his *Commands*, is to *educate and train up* our Nature for *Heaven*, to *discipline and exercise* it in the *beatifick Acts* of the *heavenly Life*; that so when it is advanced from this *School of Probation*, to the *University of Happiness*, it may be *instructed* in the *Language*, and *naturalized* to the *Exercise* of it; that it may be *pre-disposed* and *habituated* to *Love and Dependance*, to *Charity and Righteousness*, and all those *beatifick Acts*, by which *Heaven* is enjoyed, so that while we follow *his Will*, we are learning to enjoy *Heaven*, and perfecting *our selves* in the Acts of our *everlasting Fruition*; that so when we go from hence to take Possession of the *Goods above*, we may be perfectly vers'd in the *Enjoyment* of them, and have the *Skill and Ability* to make a *happy Use* of them for ever. Whereas on the contrary, while we follow *our own corrupt Will and Inclinations*, we do not only *not* learn these blessed Acts of *Fruition*; but we learn the quite *Contraries*. Instead of learning to enjoy *God* by *Love and Adoration*, we learn how to divide our selves *eternally* from him, by contracting *Enmity* to him, and a *prophane Contempt* of *his Majesty*. Instead of learning to enjoy *Saints and Angels* by *Charity and Righteousness*, we learn how to banish our selves from their *Society*, by contracting *malicious and dishonest Inclinations*: In a Word, instead of learning to enjoy *our selves* by *Humility and Temperance*, we learn how to be our own *Devils and Tormenters*, by contracting *Pride* and an *unlimited Propension* to *bodily Pleasures*; by which means we shall at last render our Nature, not only *impotent*, but also *irreconcilable* to all those *blessed Acts* of our *future Happiness*, and so utterly disable *our selves* from enjoying *Heaven*, that it would be a *real Grievance* to us to be forc'd to endure it. For when by *thus following my own wicked Will*, I have contracted a *deep and inveterate Aversion* to all those *beatifick Acts* by which *Heaven* is enjoyed, I have an *Antipathy* against *Heaven* in my Nature; and so long as *this* continues, *Heaven* must be a *Torment* to me, instead of a *Fruition*: And if when I go from hence into *Eternity*, I should be admitted into *Heaven*, with this *prevailing Aversion* to the *beatifick Acts* of it; I should be so far from enjoying it, that I should loath it, and rather chuse to *banish* my self from it *forever*, than to be confined to a Condition so *unsuitable* to my Nature. Whilst therefore I am running from *God*, after *my own Will*, I am running from *Heaven*; and if I do not stop the sooner, shall run my self to a Distance from it, as *immense and irreconcilable*, as that which separated *Dives* from *Abraham's Bosom*.

And thus you see, how indispensibly *necessary* upon all these Accounts, *Self denial* is, in order to our *future Happiness*. Hence then, let us all be persuaded to renounce our *corrupt Will and Affections*, and resign up *our selves* to the Government of *God*: And further, to move you hereunto, I beseech you, briefly to consider with me these Four Things:

1. That in its self, *this* is the most *just* and *equitable* Thing you can do.
2. That in *this* consists the *Life* and *Substance* of *all* your Religion.
3. That *this* is the great Hinge upon which your *Safety* and *Security* depends.
4. That in this you do the most *effectually* consult *your own* Interest.

1. That to deny your *own Wills*, and resign *up* your selves to the Government of God, is in it self the most *just* and *equitable* Thing you can do. For *all* your Powers and Faculties are God's, by an *unalienable* Right and Property; your Understanding is *his*, and your *Will* is *his*, and *all* your Powers of Action are the *Births* and *Products* of his *fruitful Will*, and *Almighty Goodness*. And if it be thus, we must *necessarily* be obliged to subject *our selves* to him, and *prostrate* our *Wills*, and all the Powers of Action at *his Feet*. If then we are *his*, as we must be, if we are made by him; what have we to do to dispose of *our selves* contrary to his *Will* and *Pleasure*? With what Colour of *Justice* can I *chuse* what He commands me to *refuse*, when my Power of chusing is *his*, and he hath a far more *undoubted* Right to it, than I have to the Cloaths on my Back? When he is the *supreme Proprietor* of that Will wherewith I *chuse*, with what Conscience can I vote with it against him, or give away any of my Choices and Elections from him? What is this, but to *embezzle* my Master's Goods, and *alienate* his Property from his Use and Service? Remember, *O Man!* in every *wicked* Choice that thou makest, thou givest away thy self from thy *right* Owner, and dost *sacrilegiously* rob God of the Fruits of his *own* Creation, and must one Day expect to render a *dreadful* Account to him for every Choice thou hast given away from him, and for every *Thought*, and *Word*, and *Action* which thou hast presumed to dispose of contrary to his Orders: For thou hast *no more* Right to give away *thy self*, or any of thy Choices and Actions from God; and canst *no more* justify thy self for so doing, than thou hast to sell away thy Landlord's *Fee-simple*, or to entail his *Inheritance* on thy Children. And before you make *too bold* with God's Property, or presume to dispose of his Goods at your Pleasure, you were best consider seriously, whom you have to deal with; that you have not to do with a *Being* that is to be *bestor'd* out of his Rights, or born down with *Might* and *Violence*; but with a God that is sufficiently sensible of your *unjust* Usurpations, and abundantly *able* to revenge them; that is *jealous* of his *own* Rights and Properties, has a *deep* Resentment of all your *injurious* Invasions of them, and an *Almighty Arm* to assert and vindicate them. And when you have consider'd this, then alienate your Choices from him if you *dare*; but in the mean Time, as you will answer the Injustice of it at the *Tribunal* of God, have a Care how you dispose of *your selves* contrary to his Orders; lest as a *just* Retribution, he should one Day dispose of you contrary to your Will, to *everlasting* Misery and Despair.

2. Consider that in this denying and resigning *our selves* to God, consists the Life and Substance of all our Religion. For what is Religion, but a *Religation* a *Tying* or *Binding* fast Mens Minds and Wills to God? It is the Bond of our *Allegiance* to the *Throne* of *Heaven*, by which we oblige *our selves* to be God's Subjects, and resign *up* our Wills, and all our Powers of Action to his Government; and in this, as I shew'd you, consists *Self denial*. For when once we have master'd *our own Self Will*, and conquer'd its Obstinacy, and persuaded it to yield up it self to the Will of God, then is his *glorious* Empire set *up* in our Souls; then he is crowned our *Sovereign Lord*, his Kingdom is come *into* us, and we may cry, *Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth*. But till once our Religion hath tied our Souls to God, and obliged our Will to renounce all other *Lords*, and submit to his Empire, it is only a Name, an *empty* Shew and Formality of Religion; 'tis a Religion without a Religion, or a Bond without a Tye; that is, 'tis downright Nonsense, and a Contradiction to it self. And what Shews or Professions *soever* we may make of Religion, how *zealous* or *forward* *soever* we may be in the *external* Acts of it, it will all signifie nothing to us, unless there be a

pro-

prostrate Will, and a resigned Heart at the Bottom. For this is the Alpha and Omega, the Corner and the Top-Stone of Religion, and to pretend Religion without this, is to pretend Loyalty in open Acts of Rebellion. And indeed, could Religion consist with a rebellious Will, the Devil himself might very fairly pretend to it: For that which makes him a Devil, is nothing but his own boisterous Self-Will, that is continually struggling and lifting up it self against God. And hence Belial is the Devil's Name, which signifies without Yoak: And accordingly, the Children of Belial are describ'd to be such, as do altogether break the Yoak, and burst the Bonds of the Lord, Jer. 5. 5. and called Children of Disobedience, Eph. 2. 2. because like their Father Belial, they are impatient of Restraint, and will hearken to no Law, but that of their own boundless Self-Will.

So far are those Men from being truly Religious, whose Wills are divided from God's, that they are *Belial's Progeny*, unyoak'd from the Divine Government, and their Wills are in a *strict Confederacy* with the Devil. And hence the Prophet Samuel speaking of *Saul's Rebellion against God*, tells him, that *Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft*, 1 Sam. 15. 23. that is, Rebellion against God, is an *implicit Confederacy* with the Devil, even as *Witchcraft* is an implicit one. For the Devil being the Prince and Ringleader of the *Rebel Creation*, whoever sets up his Will against God, does thereby renounce his Allegiance to Heaven; and, like a false Recreant, joyns Hands with the Devil in Rebellion against his Maker. And whilst a Man's Soul doth thus clasp Wills with the Devil, and conspires with him in his Rebellion against Heaven; what impudent Hypocrisie is it for him to pretend to Religion? Wherefore, either let us be so modest for the future, as not to pretend to Religion, or any of those blessed Hopes it sets before us; or, let us resolve to be so honest to our Pretensions, as to deny our selves, and resign up our Wills to God. For while our Will and God's are divided and separated, and do in any Instance tread *Antipodes* to each other, all our Pretence of Religion is a shameless Cheat; which when it comes to be examined at the Tribunal of God, will be found a mere Paint, and artificial Complexion dawl'd upon a black and devilish Nature.

3. Consider, that upon our denying our selves, and resigning our Wills to God, depends all our Safety and Security. For if God be against us, all the Powers of Heaven and Earth can't secure us; because his Will hath an infinite Power conjoyned with it, that like an irresistible Torrent, bears down all Oppositions, and sweeps every Thing before it, that stands in its Way. To what purpose then, should such impotent Things as we, set up our Wills against his? Can you ever hope to prevail against him, or to force his Almighty Will into a Compliance with yours? Gird up your selves like Men, and I will demand of you in the Name of God; Have you an Arm like God, or can you thunder with a Voice like him? Are ye able to withstand the Whirlwind of his Power, or to shelter your Heads against the Storms of his Vengeance? Alas! no; a Feather in the Air may sooner stop a Thunder-Bolt that comes roaring down from the Clouds, than you can the Course of that Almighty Will, which doth whatsoever it pleases both in Heaven and Earth: And if so, with what Safety can you oppose your impotent Will to it; or how can you expect to prosper in such an unequal Contention? Since therefore God doth so infinitely out-match you, and 'tis infallibly certain, that first, or last, he will be too hard for you; all that is left to your Choice, is, whether you will do his Will, or suffer it; whether you will obey his Commands, or endure his Inflictions: For one of these you must do; but which of the Two, is left to your own Election. If you think it more eligible, to obey what God hath enjoyned, than to endure what he will inflict, you may, by choosing the former, eternally secure your selves from the latter: For, besides, that such is the generous Goodness of God's Nature, as it will not permit him to trample upon the Prostrate, nor to deny fair Quarter to such as lay down their Arms, and freely surrender themselves to his Will and Disposal; besides this, I say, upon the Satisfaction which his own Son hath made for the Sins of the World, he hath obliged himself by a publick Grant and Promise of Mercy, to receive us into his Favour and Protection, upon our unfeigned

Submission to him, and to treat us graciously notwithstanding all our *past* Rebel-
 lions, as if we had been for ever perfectly loyal to him, and had neither in
Thought, nor *Word*, nor *Deed*, offended him. So that now, if we will hearti-
 ly submit our Wills to him, he cannot let loose *his* Power on us, without for-
 feiting *his* Truth, and doing Violence to the Perfections of *his own* Nature.
 But notwithstanding all the *Goodness* of his own Nature, and all the *Vertue* of
 that *Propitiation* that he hath made for our *Sins*, this is a Law which he will ne-
 ver dispense with; *I will see that my Creatures shall obey me, or feel me, that they*
shall conform to my Will, or sink under my Vengeance; and if they will be so desperate
as to refuse the former, all the Powers of Heaven and Earth shall not secure them from
the latter. If therefore you are so *abandoned* of all Reason, as to think it more e-
 ligible to suffer the Will of God, than to obey it, you must e'en take what fol-
 lows: For, as sure as God is in *Heaven*, and you upon *Earth*, you shall one Day
 feel the Weight of his Arm, if you do not freely *surrender* your selves to *his* Will
 and Disposal. But before you do so, for your Souls sake, consider once more, what
 a *terrible* Election you are making; that 'tis the unquenchable *Wrath* of the ever-
 living God, that you are throwing your selves upon; a *Wrath* that will imprint
 it self upon every Faculty of your Nature, and be dropping like *burning Sulphur* up-
 on your Souls *for ever*. And if after you have considered this, you will still ad-
 here to your *desperate* Option, *the Lord have Mercy upon your Souls.*

4. And Lastly, Consider, that if there were *no* Obligation to this Duty, or *no*
 Danger in the contrary; yet in thus denying our selves, and resigning our Wills
 to God, we do the *most* effectually consult *our own* Interest. For God, being in-
 finitely happy in *his own* Perfections, and deriving all possible Satisfaction from his
 own *Self-Sufficiency*, cannot be supposed to desire *any* Thing for himself *without*
 himself; and being perfectly exempted from all Want and Indigence, by the in-
 finite Fulness of his Being, he can have *nothing* of Envy or Malice in his Nature;
 which are *weak* and *impotent* Passions, that do always spring out of a Sense of
 Need and Insufficiency, and are *utterly* inconsistent with a State of *perfect* Fulness and
 Beatitude. Since therefore in his *outward* Administrations he can have no *Self-Ends*
 to serve upon his Creatures, and since he can have no Principle of Envy or Malice
 towards them in his Nature; it hence necessarily follows, that in ruling and go-
 verning them, he can have no *other* Design upon them, but to do them *good*, and
 make them like *himself*, *i. e.* perfectly happy. So that God's End and *ours* is al-
 ways the same; *we* would be happy, and God would have us so *too*, and our selves
 cannot aim at our Happiness more heartily and sincerely than he does; all the
 Difference therefore between *him* and *us*, is about the *Means* and *Way* to our Hap-
 piness: We are for one Way, and he is for another; we think the Way to our
 Happiness, is, *to live in all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts*; and he thinks the Way
 to it, is, *to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present World.* So that the
 whole Dispute between God and us, so far as Reason is concerned in it, depends
 upon *this*, whether God be in the right, or our selves; whether we are not deceiv-
 ed in chusing *this* Way, or God be not deceived in prescribing the *contrary*. If
 we have any Reason to think that *we* are *wiser* than God, or do better understand
 the Way to *our own* Happiness; then it must be acknowledged, that in refusing
 God's Way, and chusing our own, we do advisedly consult *our own* Interest: But
 this is such a Supposal, as, I believe, never entered into *any* Man's *sober* Thoughts.
 And if we have all the Reason in the World to conclude, not only that God is *wiser*
 than *we*; but that whereas *we* are *extreamly short-sighted*, and apt to be imposed
 upon with *glistring* Shews and Appearances, he hath such a *full* Comprehension
 of all Things, as that he cannot be deceived; then we may be sure, that when we
 forsake *our own* Way, and follow God's, we cannot be mis-led, but at every Step
 must be tending directly to *our own* Happiness. For if God cannot be deceived,
 and we may, it is certain, that whenever our Way to Happiness lies contrary to
 his, he is in the *right*, and we are in the *wrong*; and consequently, that when we
 forsake *his* Way, to follow our own, we go from Happiness to Misery.

Is it likely, that *we* should know what belongs to Human Nature, and the *ordering* and *regulating* its *Affections* and *Actions*? That *we* should understand the *just Bounds* and *Measures* where it is to be *restrained*, and where *indulged*, better than the God that *formed* and *composed* it. And if it be not, as doubtless, it is not, were we not much better resign our Wills to his Government, than to live at our own Disposal? For he desires to govern us for no other Reason, but because he knows he can govern *us* much better than *our selves*? He sees, that we are a sort of *blind* and *precipitant* Creatures, that must unavoidably stumble into *Eternal Ruin*, if we follow our own Wills; and therefore he would fain retrieve us out of our *own* Hands; that so having the *sole Disposal* of us himself, he may conduct us safely to Happiness. And when *He* intends as *kindly* to *us*, as *we* can to *our selves*, were we not better follow *his* Wisdom, than *our own* Folly? He knows, that our *Self-Love* will in the Effect prove *Self-Hatred* to us, if it be not *moderated* and *directed* by a better and wiser Love: And therefore he wou'd have it under the Direction of *his*, which is the best and wisest Love in the World. He desires to have the Government of our *Will*, upon no other Account, but only that he might determine *all* its Choices to our Happiness; and requires our Hearts of us merely for *this End*, that he might fill them with Peace and Rest. He knows, that our Perfection and Happiness lies in compliance with our Duty, in Piety and Justice, Mercy and Humility; and that out of the free and constant, sprightly and vivacious Exercise of those Vertues, arises all our Heaven both here and hereafter: And knowing this, that tender Love he bears us, that mighty Concern he hath for our Welfare, makes him thus urgent and importunate with us in his Demands of our Duty: For he regards our Duty no farther than it tends to our Good; and values each Act of our Obedience, by what it contributes to our Happiness. He affects not to burthen us with unnecessary Impositions: All that he requires of us, is what our Interest requires; which is so dear and precious to him, that he will dispense with nothing that is necessary to promote and secure it; and 'tis therefore he will not dispense with *us*, because he cannot, without releasing *us* from our Obligation to be happy. Why then should we desire, (O Foolish Creatures that we are!) to be released from the Yoke of his Government? Or how can we count it Liberty to be loosed from an infinite Goodness, that is conducted by infinite Wisdom and Power? For whatsoever my *blind Lusts* and *Passions* may dictate, my Reason assures me, that the greatest Privilege that belongs to a Creature, is to be under the Government of God; and that if he should release me from my Subjection to his *Will*, by a Dispensation under the Broad-Seal of Heaven, and give me an unlimited Licence to Live as I list, promising never to be displeased with me more, or to take any farther Cognizance of my *Actions*; the best and wisest Thing I could do for my self, would be, to resign back my self to his Government, and surrender up my *blind* and *precipitant Will* to his most Wise and Gracious Disposal! And if he should refuse to re-admit me to his Government, and abandon me for ever to my *own Self-Will*, I should be the most forlorn Soul on this side Hell; I should not know what to do, nor which Way to turn my self; but be forced to Wander in a *dark Wilderness*, without being ever able to discover any certain Path-way to my Happiness. But so long as I am under the Government of God, I am sure I am safe; and while I follow his *All-wise* and *most gracious Will*, I know that I am going to a Happy End; and that how rough soever my Way is, it will bring me to *Canaan*. What then remains, but that from henceforth we utterly deny *our selves*, renounce our *corrupt Wills* and *Inclinations*, and cheerfully resign our selves to the Will of God; which hath no other Design upon us, but to do us Good, to raise and advance our degenerate Natures, and conduct us through the Kingdom of Grace into the Kingdom of Glory.

DISCOURSE VIII.

UPON

I JOHN iii. 7.

Little Children, let no Man deceive you: He that doth Righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous.

THESE Words are a short and plain *Resolution* of that *Grand Case*, viz. How a Man may know whether he be in a State of *Grace* and *Favour* with God; or, which is all one, whether he be a good Man and a good Christian. The *Gnosticks*, against whom St. John particularly directs this *Epistle*, placed all *Righteousness* and *Goodness* in certain pretended *Illuminations*, which had nothing in them but certain *swelling* Words of *Vanity*, and, like gilded Bubbles, were blown up with Wind, and filled with mystical Nonsense. And tho' in their *Lives* and *Manners* they were a *Reproach* and *Scandal*, not only to Religion, but even to Human Nature; yet merely on the Account of these their own wild Dreams, they vaunted themselves to be the only *Elect* and *Favourites* of God; and imagined themselves advanced to that Degree of Perfection, as that they were above all Law, and freely dispensed with under the Broad Seal of Heaven to live as they listed, and to wallow in Riot and Voluptuousness. Against these Wild Men the Apostle here seems to forewarn his Little Children: Suffer not these Vile Deceivers to impose upon your Faith this their damnable Error, viz. that by receiving their *high-flown* Mysteries and *pretended* Revelations, you shall without any more ado, be constituted *perfect* and *righteous* Men in the Sight of God: For from God himself, I do assure you, that *He*, and *He* only, *that doth Righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous*, i. e. as *Christ* is righteous, of whom I just before discoursed.

In the Prosecution of which Argument, I shall endeavour these Two Things:

1. To shew you what it is to do *Righteousness* in general.
2. What that *Righteous Doing* is, which in the Sence of *Christianity* constitutes us *Righteous Men*.

1. What it is to do *Righteousness* in general. I answer, it is to give to every one his Due; or to perform to God, our selves, and to all the World, whatsoever is owing from the State of our Nature, and the Relations and Circumstances wherein we are placed. And in this Latitude, to do *Righteousness* is the Sum of Religion, and the *Whole Duty* of Man. The *Righteous Man* therefore, or the Man that doth *Righteousness*, is, in the Sence of the Text, one, that demeans himself so, as in the Judgment of *Right Reason* he ought to do, towards God, himself and all the World: That looking upon himself under the Relation of God's Creature and Pensioner, doth freely render him all that *Homage*, and *Reverence*, and *Love*, and *Gratitude*, and *Trust*, and *Adoration*, that are owing to so Great a Creator, and so Liberal a Benefactor: One, that considering the Frame of his own Nature, how he

he is compounded of *contrary Principles*, viz. *Spirit and Flesh, Reason and Sense*, exercises himself in all those *Human Vertues*, which consist in the Dominion of his *superiour Principles of Reason* over his *sensitive Passions and Appetites*; such as *Patience and Equanimity, Courage and Meekness, Temperance and Chastity*: All which are proper to us, as Beings made up of *contrary Principles*, from whence spring those *contrary Appetites and Inclinations* in us; in the *good or bad Government* whereof, the *Essence of Human Vertue and Vice* consists. In a Word, the *Righteous Man* is one, who considering his *State, and Circumstances, and Relations*, in the World, behaves himself in them all as *right Reason* directs and obliges him; that, as he is a *Member of Human Society*, bears an hearty *Good-Will*, to the whole *Corporation of Mankind*; that is *courteous and affable, peaceable and condescending, long-suffering and ready to forgive*; that is *grateful* to those from whom he hath received *Good*, and so far as he hath *Opportunity*, is ready to do *Good to others*; that is *faithful to his Promises, sincere in his Professions, just and honest in his Dealings*; that heartily wishes every *Man* were *good*, and without *manifest Reason* to the contrary, believes every one to be so; that when he sees a *Fault*, is ready to *excuse* it; and where he cannot, silently *bewails and laments* it; that as a *Subject*, is *loyal and obedient* to his *Superiours*, and as a *Superiour*, is careful of the *Publick Good*, and *just and benign* towards all his *Inferiours*; that as a *Father*, loves his *Children*, piously and wisely educates them, and is provident for their *Happiness both here and hereafter*; that as a *Child*, reverences his *Parents*, and is ready to *comfort and assist* them in their *Needs*, and in all lawful Things, to render them a *cheerful Obedience*; that as a *Husband*, is kind to his *Wife*, *compassionate* to her *Infirmities*, and *easy* to be intreated by her; that as a *Wife*, is *modest* in her Behaviour, *careful and vigilant* in her Family, and *soft and tractable* to the *Will* of her *Husband*; that as a *Master*, is *just and benevolent* to his *Servants*, and studious of their *Welfare, both temporal and eternal*; that as a *Servant*, is *industrious* in his *Business*, and *faithful* to his *Trust*, and *obedient* to his *Master*; that in *Adversity* is *resigned and contented*, *honestly industrious* to live, and *grateful* to those that relieve him; that in *Prosperity*, is *humble and modest*, and full of *good Works*: And to name no more, He is a *cordial Friend*, a *good Neighbour*, a *faithful Correspondent*, and a *zealous Lover* of his *Country*. These are the *main Ingredients* that compound a *Righteous Man*: And accordingly, we find that wherever he is mentioned in *Scripture*, he is always described by such like *Characters* as these: Thus, in the 15th *Psalms*, where the *Psalmist* sets himself on purpose to describe the *Righteous Man* that should dwell in the *Tabernacle of God*, he is represented as one that *walketh uprightly, and worketh Righteousness*; that *speaketh Truth*, and is *tender* of his *Neighbour's Reputation*; that freely lends to those that are in *Need*, and will not be bribed against the *Innocent*. So also *Ezek. 18. 14, 15, 16, 17.* he is described to be one that is no *Idolater*, no *Adulterer*, no *Oppressor*; that doth not *defraud* his *Neighbour* of his *Right*; but is *Just and Liberal* to the *Poor*, and freely lends to those that are in *Need*. And *Micah 6. 7.* the *Prophet* tells us, what it is that renders us *just and acceptable* in the sight of *God*, viz. *doing Justice, loving Mercy, and walking Humbly with God*. So also in the *New Testament* we are taught, that *pure and undefiled Religion* consists in *visiting the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction*, and *keeping our selves unspotted from the World*, *James 1. 27.* And *Gal. 5. 22.* *St. Paul* tells us, that the *Fruits of the Spirit* which render us *righteous* in the Sight of *God*, are such as these, *Love Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance*: And to name no more, the same *Apostle*, *Tit. 2. 11.* saith, that the *Righteousness* which the *Gospel, or Grace of God* designs to propagate in the World, is this, *that denying Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*; which Three, are the Sum of all those *Vertues* which constitute a *Righteous Man*.

Having thus shewed, what it is in general, to do *Righteousness*; I now proceed in the *second Place*, to shew, what that *Righteous Doing* is, which in the Sense of *Christianity*, doth constitute us *Righteous Men*: In order to which, it will be necessary to premise these Three Things:

1. That

1. That *Christianity* supposes many *Imperfections* and *Infirmities* in those whom it yet allows to be *Righteous Men*; and indeed, if it did not, it could admit no Man in the World to be righteous. For it hath seemed good to the *Divine Wisdom* to introduce us into the World in an *imperfect* State that so by the *good Use* of our own *Free Wills* and *Rational Faculties*, assisted by his *Grace*, we might by Degrees advance to a more *sublime* and *perfect* Condition; till through our *gradual* Progress from this *rude* and *imperfect* State, we at length arrive to the Perfection of Happiness for which we were made. And such is the Condition of our Nature, as that it is as necessary for us to begin imperfectly, as to be born Infants; nor can a *Babe in Christ* any more have the Perfections of a *grown* and *experienced* Christian, than can an Infant of a Span long, have the Strength and Wisdom of a Man. In this State of Things therefore, if God will not allow the *lowest* Degree of our Perfection to be *good*, neither can he the *highest*: For our Improvement being gradual, there must of necessity be a *first* Degree, before there can be a *second*; and therefore if God allows not the *first*, he must for the same Reason disallow the *second* of the *same* kind; and so on from the *third*, to the *highest* Degree of all. Seeing therefore *Christianity* is a *Religion* for Men, it must be supposed to be fitted to their *low* and *imperfect* Condition; which it could not be, if it did not *abate* for our Defects, and admit us to be righteous in the *main*, even while we are imperfectly so; and that it doth so, is apparent by the Distinction it frequently makes between the *less* and the *more* Perfect, still allowing both to be Righteous. Thus it distinguishes between *Babes* and *Men*, allowing *both* to be in *Christ*; between the *Weak*, and the *Strong*, and *Confirmed*, allowing both to be in the Faith: And our Saviour himself speaking of *some*, who upon receiving the Seed of the Gospel, brought forth *Sixty*, and others a *Hundred-fold*, doth yet allow them all to be *good Ground*, Matth. 13. and Luke 19. 14. He as well allows *him* to be a *good and faithful Servant* who had improved his *Talent into Five*, as he who had improved *his into Ten*. From all which it is evident, that the Gospel doth not judge of our *main* State by the Degrees; but by the Reality of our Righteousness.

2. It is to be premised, that *that* which constitutes us Righteous Men in the Judgment of the Gospel, is some *internal, vital* Principle of Righteousness. For as all other Things receive their Denomination from their Forms; so it is from some internal Form of Righteousness, that Righteous Men receive their Denomination. It is not the simple doing righteous Actions, that constitutes a Man righteous: For he may be a very bad Man, not only while he doth that which is righteous, but also in the very doing of it. Thus a Man may Fast and Pray, only to gloss his *Oppressions*; he may do an Honest Action, to disguise a *Knaveish Design*; in which Case he sins in the doing of it; because in the doing it, he *profanes* Religion, by making it a Cloak for his Wickedness: A plain Evidence, that Actions which in themselves are materially *good*, do partake of the Principles from whence they do proceed, and receive their *Forms* and *Denominations* from them; seeing even *good* Actions may be infected by a *bad* Principle, and derive into themselves the Malignity and Baseness of the *Fountains* from whence they flow. And if without a *righteous* Principle, our Actions cannot be *righteous*, to be sure, neither can we; because we are as our Actions are. Hence you may observe in the *New Testament*, that *good* Men are generally denominated from the internal Form of Goodness; they are said to be *born of God*, and to have the *Seed of God remaining in them*, 1 Joh. 3. 9. and to be *renewed in the Spirit of their Mind*, Eph. 4. 23. to be *spiritually minded*, Rom. 8. 6. and to be *transformed by the renewing of their Mind*, Rom. 12. 2. and to be *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. All which do plainly denote, that to constitute us *righteous Men* in the Sense of the Gospel, there is necessarily required some internal Form and Principle of *Righteousness*.

3. And Lastly, We must premise, that *Christianity* being the Law, or Rule of our Religion, the internal Principle, which in the Sence of this Law constitutes us *righteous*, must be strictly Religious; that is, it must be such as doth immediately respect God, who is the *great Object* of *all Religion*. For *Religion*, in the strictest Sence, is the Rule of Divine Worship; and under this Notion of Divine Worship, or Homage, and Obedience to God, Christianity exacts every Duty of us: For it requires us *to do all as unto God*, and *to do all to the Glory of God*, i. e. in Obedience to him, and out of a sincere Acknowledgment of his Authority over us, and immutable Right to rule and command us: And even those Moral Vertues which do immediately respect our Neighbours and our selves, are enjoyned as Duties unto God, and bound upon us with *Religious Obligations*. So that now, all the *Acts* and *Functions* of a *good Life* are adobted into the Rubrick of Christian Worship, and requir'd of us as *Acts* of Obedience to God: From whence it follows, that the Spring and Principle of those Acts must be strictly Religious, immediately respecting God and *his Authority* over us; it being impossible those Acts shou'd be truly Religious, which do not proceed from a Religious Principle.

These Things being premised, I come now to lay down what *that Principle* is, which in the Sence of *Christian Religion* constitutes us *Righteous Men*. In general, it is a *considerate, universal prevailing Resolution* to obey God, proceeding from our Belief of the *Christian Religion*. For the better understanding of which, I shall briefly explain the *particular Terms* of it.

1. I say, it is a *Resolution*.
2. It is a *Resolution* of obeying God.
3. It is a *Considerate* Resolution.
4. An *Universal*, and
5. A *Prevalent* one.
6. A Resolution of obeying God, springing out of our Belief of the *Christian Religion*.

1. It is a Resolution; by which I exclude the *Habit of Obedience* from being the *prime and constitutive Principle* of *Christian Righteousness*. For *Christianity*, as was shewn before, supposing *great Imperfections* and *Infirmities*, even in those whom it allows to be *righteous* in the main; if we would judge rightly of *our own State* by the *Christian Rule*, we must take measure of our selves from that which is the *lowest* and most *imperfect Principle* of *Righteousness*, and not conclude our selves to be *unrighteous*, because we are not righteous to such a Degree: But as for the *Habit of Obedience*, which consists in an *inherent Promptness, Faculty and easiness* to obey, it is so *perfect* a Principle, as is not attainable, but under a *long Progreß* in Religion. For when after a *vicious Course* of Life, we begin to *reform*, we are so far from being *habituated* to obey God, that we obey him with Difficulty, and strong Reluctancy, and are fain to row against the Stream of *our own Inclination*: In which State we are far from having attained to an *Habit* or *Promptness* of obeying. So that by making *this* the *constitutive Principle* of *Christian Righteousness*, we exclude from the State of *Righteousness* all *Beginners* in Religion; and do allow none to be *faithful Servants*, but those who have conquer'd the *Difficulties* of obeying. The true Form or Principle therefore, from which we receive the Denomination of *Righteous Men*, is *that Point or Term*, from which we *begin* to be righteous, and that is a *righteous Resolution*. For *Choice* and *Resolution* is the Spring of *all voluntary Actions*; and consequently, from thence we begin to *act* righteously; and in the Pursuit of *that*, we *grow* and *improve* into an *Habit* of *Righteousness*. Our *first Step* is to *resolve well*; our *next*, to *do well*; the uninterrupted Repetition of which, will at length improve into an *Habit of well-doing*. *I will arise*, says the Prodigal, *and go to my Father*: That was the *first Step* of his Return, and the *vital Principle* whence all his *After-Motions* did proceed.

2. It is a Resolution to obey God: By which I exclude those *good* Resolutions from being the *Christian Principle* of Righteousness which have no *respect* at all to God; but either to the gratifying our *natural* Temper only, or to the *securing* our Health or Reputation, or *secular* Interest: Which, tho' they may be productive of very good *Morals* in our Conversation, are far from being the *inward* Form and Principle of Righteousness which *Christianity* requires: For that we should obey God, is the *fundamental Law* of Religion, whence *all* its *particular Laws* derive their Force and Obligation: And therefore to resolve to obey God, must be the *fundamental Principle* of Religion, from whence *all* the *particular Acts* of it proceed. So that the *internal* Principle, which constitutes us religiously *good*, must answer to that *external* Principle which obliges us to be so; and it is only our Resolution to obey God, which *answers* to that *external* Principle that makes it our Duty to obey him.

In *this* Resolution, and *this* only, consists the Submission of our Wills to God, the Homage and Fealty of our Souls; without which, all external Shews of Piety and Vertue are but a *dead* Formality. Not that an *actual* explicit Resolution of obeying God is necessary to every *good Action*: For this is impossible; our Occasions of doing good, being so *infinite*, and so *often* occurring in our Secular Affairs, and our Minds so incapable of attending many Things at once, that it is not in our Power to form an *Actual* Resolution of Obedience, as often as we are call'd upon to do *good Actions*. It is sufficient therefore, that in general, we have *such* a Resolution fixt in our Minds: And this, tho' we do not exert it in every *particular Action*, will constitute every *Action good*, and render it acceptable to God.

3. It must be a *considerate, well-weighed* Resolution: By which I exclude from being the Principle of *Christian Righteousness*, all those *rash* and *unsettled* Purposes Men make in Heats of Passion. For there can never be any *holding good* Resolution, but what is founded upon *Reason* and *Judgment*: For *Reason* is the same Thing in all Circumstances; it is a stiff and inflexible Thing, that will not ply and bend to the Alterations of our Humours and Interests: Whereas *Passion* is a *fickle* and *inconstant* Thing, that is generally governed by outward *Accidents*, and is as various and mutable as they. He therefore that founds his *good* Resolutions upon Heats of Passion, sets his Soul upon a Weather-cock, which every contrary Blast of Humour or Interest, blows into a contrary Position. Till such time therefore, as a Man hath a *new* Judgment of Things, it will be in vain for him to make any *new* Resolutions; because it is morally impossible, that any Resolution should be Lasting, that is not founded upon Reason and Judgment. But when a Man hath steered the past Course of his Life, by an old, inveterate, false Judgment of Things, it will require a great deal of serious Consideration to form and settle a new one. And if before this is done, Men enter upon new Resolutions, they must resolve without considering either the *Matters* they resolve on, or the *Motives* which should support their Resolution: Insomuch that when they come to practise what they *thus* hastily resolv'd, either they find more Difficulty in the Matter than they were aware of, or want sufficient Motives to carry them through it; by reason of which, their Resolution *flags* in the Execution, and many times yields to the *next* Temptation that encounters them. To the forming therefore of a Holding Resolution, such as will prove a *Living* Principle of *Righteousness*, great Care must be taken to found it on a *thorough* Consideration, both of the Particulars we resolve upon, together with their *appendent* Difficulties; and of the *Motives* and *Arguments* with which Christianity *backs* and *enforces* it. First, We must set before our Eyes the *Sins* we must part with, and the *Duties* we must submit to; and fairly represent to our selves the many Difficulties and Temptations that are like to attend us in both; and having thus placed our selves in the midst of the Difficulties of a Religious Life, and so far as in us lies, rendred them *Actual* and *Present* to us, we must never cease pressing our stubborn Wills with the *Arguments* and *Motives* of Religion, till we have obtained of them an *Explicit* Consent to every Duty that calls for our Resolution. And when we have *thus* weighed all Particulars over and over

over, in the Balance of an impartial Consideration, and implored the Divine Assistance, (without which our strongest Resolution will certainly fail, and which is never wanting to any, but those who are wanting to themselves) let us then resolve, and seal our Resolution with *solemn Vows and Promises* to God: For thus our *blessed Saviour*, when he saw the Multitude forward to follow him, fairly proposes to their Consideration the Difficulties they must engage in, if they would be his Disciples; that so their resolving in *too much haste*, might not give them Occasion to repent at *Leisure*; as you may see at large, Luke 14. 26 -- 34. And else. where he compares *rash and inconsiderate* Resolvers, to a Man that goes about to build a Tower, without ever considering what it will cost, or whether he hath Money sufficient to finish it; and so when he hath laid the Foundation, gives it over, and renders himself *ridiculous*: And the *same* he compares also to a King that goes to War without ever considering whether he hath Force enough to encounter his Enemy; and so rushing headlong into the Battle, is either forced to *retreat*, or *yield* to the Mercy of the Conqueror. And in the *Parable* of the *Prodigal*, Luke 15. wherein he purposely describes the *whole* Progress of the Soul towards God; the first Thing the Prodigal did, after he came to himself, was to consider what an *happy* Change he should make in his Condition by returning to his Father; *How many hired Servants of my Father's have Bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger!* And having well considered *this*, he at length resolves, *I will arise, and go to my Father.* Thus also the Prophet *David* introduces his Resolution of Amendment, through a *deep and serious* Consideration of his Ways; *I thought on my Ways, and turned my Feet unto thy Testimonies.* Psal. 119. 59.

4. It must be an *universal* Resolution of obeying God; such as indifferently extends to *all* the Instances of our Duty; otherwise it can be no intire Principle of *Righteousness*; because tho' it may reform us in *some Instances*, it must leave us unreformed in *others*, and so can only render us *less wicked*, but never *intirely good*. For seeing the *Christian Law* exacts of us Universal Obedience; and doth not oblige us in *one Instance* more than *another*; it is impossible that *any* Resolution shou'd be the Principle of *that* Righteousness it requires, but that which respects the *whole*. *If we keep the whole Law, saith St. James, and yet offend in one Point, we are guilty of all*: For which he subjoins *this Reason*; *He that hath said, do not commit Adultery, said also, do not kill, Jam. 2. 10, 11. i. e.* It is the *same Authority* that forbids the *one*, as well as the *other*: And therefore, tho' thou dost not the *one*; yet if thou dost the *other*, thou sinnest against the *Authority* of *both*. Seeing therefore we are not accounted *universally righteous* by the Law of *Christ*, unless we do *universally* obey it, a *partial* Resolution to obey, can never constitute us *righteous*; because such a Resolution will never make us *universally obedient*. *Then shall I not be ashamed, saith David, when I have respect to all thy Commandments, Psal. 119. 6.* So that to make our Resolution a *Christian Principle* of *Righteousness*, it is necessary that it shou'd be *universal, i. e.* of *equal* Extent with *that* Law which is the Measure of our *Righteousness*; that like a fruitful Womb, it should be pregnant with every *good Work*, and virtually contain in it every Particular that our Religion hath made our Duty.

5. It must be a *prevailing* Resolution; a Resolution of such Force, as doth engage us to *do* what we resolve, and actually prevails over all Temptations to the contrary. For all the Vertue of a good Resolution consists in its relation to *Action*; because if That we resolve to do, be not necessary, it is indifferent whether we resolve to do it or no: But if it be, it must be done; otherwise we had been as good never to have resolved to do it.

The *Goodness* of our Resolution therefore, consists in *this*, that it is an Engagement to practise what we resolve; and consequently, if our Resolution to obey God, be not prevalent enough to engage us to obey him; it is so far from being a true Principle of *Christian Righteousness*, that it is a mere insignificant Cypher. For as That can be no Cause, which produces no Effect; so that can be no Principle of *Righteousness*, which is not productive of it: And if to make it a Prin-

ciple of Righteousness, it is necessary, that it should be a prevalent Engagement to a *righteous* Life, then it follows, that when it ceases to be prevalent, it ceases to be a Principle of Righteousness; and consequently, that whenever we do commit any *Sin*, that is inconsistent with a *prevailing* Resolution to obey God, we do for that Time cease to be *righteous* Men.

But there are no *Sins* inconsistent with the *prevailing* Resolution to obey God, but such as do prevail against it, and actually *over-power* it: And therefore, as for those *Weaknesses*, *Surreptions*, and *Surprizes*, which for Distinction-sake, we call, *Sins of Infirmary*; either we do not consent to them, and consequently, they are so far from *over-powering* our good Resolution, that they do not at all *contest* with it; or if we do consent to them, it is unawares, before we can *oppose* our Resolution against them. So that tho' upon Surprise they do win our Consent; yet they do not win it from our good Resolution, which in this *sudden* Hurry of Thoughts, had not time to canvass for it; but had Power enough to have obtained it, had it had but Opportunity to prefer its Claim: And therefore as for such Sins as these, they may fairly comport with the *prevailing* Resolution of Obedience. But then there are *Sins of Wilfulness*, which proceed either from wilful Habits, or from *deliberate* Choice; and these are no more consistent with such a Resolution, than one Contrary is with another in the same Degree. For he who *sins* wilfully, is prevalently resolved to sin; and to be so, and at the same time prevalently resolved to obey God, is a Contradiction in Terms. Whilst therefore Sin hath the Prevalence in us, we are so long Servants of *Sin*, and do so long cease to be Servants of *Righteousness*. 'Tis true, there are Degrees of *Wickedness*; and the longer a Man continues *wicked*, the worse he will be; but still he is a *wicked* Man, who is more prevalently resolved to *sin*, than to obey God; and he who is so, tho' but for an *Hour* or a *Day*, is so long wicked, as well as he who continues so for a *Month* or a *Year*: He is not wicked indeed to so *high* a Degree, and so may far more easily recover; but from the Time that we deliberately consent to any *known* Sin, to the Time that we repent of it, we are *wilful* Sinners. If we repent immediately, we immediately recover into that good Estate from whence we were fallen; and so our Wound is cured almost as soon as it is made. For the proper Repentance of single Acts of *wilful* Sin, is either to resolve not to repeat them; or, where it can be done, to undo them again by Restitution. But when our *baffled* Resolution to obey God, is thus recover'd into a *prevalent* Engagement to obey him, it revives into a living Principle of Righteousness; But yet before we can reasonably conclude it is such, we must make some *Trial* of it: For as it is certain, that until it be Prevalent, it is not a *true* Principle of Righteousness; so it is certain, that till for some time it hath actually prevailed, we cannot be secure that it is prevalent. That is not to be called a *prevalent* Resolution, that for a *Day* or a *Week* puts us into a *Fit* of Religion, and so expires: Such *flashy* Purposes are so far from being *thorough* Cures, that they are only so many *Intermissions* of our Disease, that always leave us as *bad* or worse than they found us. But if upon sufficient Trial, we find that our Resolution doth hold against *all* Temptations, and actually engage us to our Duty, in despite of all Sollicitations to the contrary; we may then safely conclude, that it is that very *vital* Principle, which in the Judgment of our *holy* Religion, doth constitute us Righteous Men. And accordingly, *Matth.* 21. 28, 29, 30. our Saviour compares those who might, but did not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, to a Son that *first* resolved to go whither his Father commanded him, but afterwards cooled, and did not obey; implying, that the great Fault, which spoiled his Resolution, and rendred it insignificant, was this; that it was not *firm* and *prevalent*; which had it been, it had actually entered him in the Kingdom of Heaven.

6. And Lastly, It must be a Resolution to obey God springing out of our Belief of the *Christian* Religion; and this it is which renders it *strictly* and *properly*, a *Christian* Principle of Righteousness. 'Tis true, indeed, if either we never heard of Christianity, or it had never been proposed to us, with *sufficient* Motives of *Credibility*; our Infidelity would have been only our Misery, but not our Crime: And

if

if upon a *thorough* Consideration of the Arguments of *natural Religion*, and of the *Good* and *Evil* which naturally springs out of good and evil Actions, we were effectually resolved to study the Will of God, and, so far as we understood it, to obey it; it had been no *criminal* Defect in our Resolution, nor to be founded upon our Belief of *Christianity*; because to believe without *sufficient* Reason, is so far from being our Duty, that it is our Defect, and an Argument of our *Weakness*, and *foolish* Credulity. But now, that *Christianity* had been made known, and sufficiently proposed to us, we cannot be *good* Men, unless we do believe it; and if we do believe it, we cannot be *good* Christians, if we do not thereupon effectually resolve to obey it. In short, therefore, they who have not the Gospel, are obliged to obey God, upon the Motives of *natural Religion*; which is all that can reasonably be expected from them: But as for *us*, who have the Gospel, wherein together with the Arguments of our Nature, God hath fairly proposed to us the higher Motives of Christianity, we are bound to believe *these* as well as *those*; and upon this Belief to proceed to a *firm* Resolution of Obedience; which if we do, our Resolution is strictly *Christian* in Contradistinction to theirs who have not the Gospel, and so resolve only upon Principles of *Natural Reason*: Not but that their Resolution is for Substance the *same* with ours; only *ours* is founded upon *greater* and more *prevalent* Motives. The Duties of *Christianity* are the same with those of *Natural Religion*; and excepting those three positive Precepts, of *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, and of worshipping God in and through *Christ*, there is no Command in the Gospel distinct from the *Eternal Rules* of *Morality*, which the Gospel doth improve upon *new* Principles, and strengthen with *more* powerful Obligations.

And thus I have explained to you what is that *Vital* Form and Principle, which, in the Sence of the Law of *Christ*, doth constitute us *righteous* Men. In short, he is a *righteous* Man in the true *Christian* Sence, who upon a *thorough* Consideration of the Arguments and Motives of Christianity, is universally and prevalently resolved to obey its Laws. To conclude all therefore, from hence I infer,

1. What is the *true safe* Way for a Man to resolve his *own* Conscience concerning the *main* State of his *Soul*, whether in the Gospel-sence he be *righteous*, or no. I know, it is a common Doctrine with some Men, that the Resolution of this great Case depends upon an *inward Whisper, Suggestion or Testimony* of the Spirit of God; which, I fear, hath fatally deluded too many Men into a groundless Confidence and Assurance. For when all of a sudden, they feel themselves surprized with *joyous* and *comfortable* Thoughts, they presently conclude it to be an *inward Whisper and Testimony* of the Spirit of God; when many times there is nothing in it, but an *unaccountable* Frisque of *melancholy* Vapours heated and fermented by a *feverish* Humour; and many of these *sudden* Joys and Dejections, which these Men interpret to be the *Incomes* and *Withdrawings* of the Spirit of God, do apparently proceed from no other Cause, than the Shiverings and Burnings of an *Ague*: Upon which account *Hysterical* Fits are frequently mistaken for *spiritual* Exercises. And when Men have most confidently believed themselves *overshadowed* by the *Holy Ghost*, their Fancies have been only hagg'd and ridden by the *Enthusiastick* Vapours of their own Spleen. And sometimes, I make no doubt, but this *sudden* Flush of *joyous* Thoughts proceeds from a *worse* Principle, even from the Suggestion of the *Devil*; who, tho' he hath no *immediate* Access to the Minds of Men, can doubtless act upon their Spirits and Humours, and thereby figure their Fancies with sprightly *Idea's*, and tickle their *Hearts* into a Rapture; and this Power of *his* we may reasonably suppose, he is ready enough to exert upon any mischievous Occasion, whenever he finds a Man willing to be deceived, and to rely upon ungrounded Presumptions. The *true* and only *safe* Way therefore, for a Man to resolve himself, is impartially to survey himself, and to consider whether in the *main*, his Intentions and Actions are *righteous*. If you ask, by what

Signs and Tokens shall a Man know this? I answer, there is nothing can be a true Sign of *Righteousness*, but *Righteousness*; nothing but what is an Act or Instance of *Righteousness*. But then we must have a great Care, that we do not argue from particular Acts and Instances, that we are *righteous* in the main: For you may as well conclude, that you are not *blind*, because you *hear* well; or that you are not *deaf*, because you *see* well; or that you have *all* your Senses, because you have *one* or *two*; as that you are *righteous* in the *main*, because you are so in *this* or *that* Particular. Well then, how shall we do to resolve our selves in this most *material* Enquiry? Why, do but consider, what it is to be *righteous*, and then reflect upon your own Motion, and you will quickly feel, whether you were *righteous* or no: For to be *righteous*, is for the main, to intend *righteously*, and act accordingly. If you ask again, how you shall know, whether you *so* intend and act; I shall only answer, that is an *unreasonable* Question; and that you might as well ask, whether you are *hungry* or *thirsty*; because you do as naturally feel the Motions of your *Soul*, as those of your *Body*: And for you to ask *another* Man, what *your own* Intentions are, is to make him a *Conjurer* instead of a *Casuis*t.

Wou'd it not look *extreamly ridiculous*, for a Man to ask his *Creditor* or *Customer*, Good Sir, how shall I know, whether I intend to pay my Debts, or am sincerely resolved not to over-reach you? Shou'd any Man ask me such a Question, I shou'd only bid him consult *himself*; and if then he suspected his own *Honesty*, truly, I shou'd suspect, that he had too much reason for it. For if a Man intends *righteously*, to be sure, he intends it knowingly; and if he knowingly intends it, he cannot but know he intends it: For if he cannot know that he doth it, it is because he cannot know how to do it; and if he cannot know how to do it, he is not a capable Subject of *Morality*; but must of necessity *live* and *act* at random, and blunder on like a Traveller in the dark, without being able to distinguish right or wrong. Wherefore, as you wou'd not be deceiv'd in a Point of the highest Importance in the World, a Point upon which your everlasting Fate depends, *viz.* Whether you are *righteous* Men or no; do not measure your selves by any other Rule, but this sure and infallible one in the Text, *He that doth Righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

2. From hence I infer, that seeing *Righteousness* is the good State of our Souls, the main thing upon which we ought to value our selves, is, upon our being truly *righteous*. For if we have any such thing as a *rational* and *immortal Soul* about us, it is doubtless, by far the noblest Ingredient of our Beings; 'tis That by which we are near allied to *Angels*, and do even border upon God himself. He therefore who values himself by any thing but his Soul, and that which is *its* Grace and Perfection; begins at the wrong End of himself, forgets his *Jewels*, and estimates his Estate by his *Lumber*: Insomuch that one wou'd think it impossible, did not too many woful *Experiments* daily evince the contrary; that any Creature owning and believing a *rational* and *immortal Spirit* to be a Part of its Being, shou'd be so ridiculous, as to value it self by such *little trifling Advantages*, as a *well-colour'd Skin*, a Suit of *fine Cloaths*, a Puff of *Popular Applause*, a Bag of *red* or *white Earth*; and yet, God help us, These are the *only Things* almost by which we difference our selves from one another. You are a much better Man than your Neighbour, who is a *poor contemptible Wretch*, a *little, creeping, despicable Animal*, not worthy to be taken notice of by such a one as you. Why, in the Name of God, Sir, what's the matter? Where is this mighty Difference between you and him? Hath he not a *Soul* as well as you; a *Soul* that is capable to live as long, and be as happy as yours? Yes, that is true indeed: But notwithstanding that, you thank God for it, you are another guise Man than he: For you have a *handsomer Body*; your *Apparel* is finer and more fashionable; you live in a more *splendid Equipage*, and have a *larger Purse* to maintain it; and to your great Comfort, your Name is more in *Vogue*, and makes a far greater *Rattle* in the World. And is this all the Difference then between your *mighty Self* and your *poor Neighbour*? Alas, a few Days more will put an End to all *this*; and when your *rich Attires* are

are reduc'd to a *Winding-Sheet*, and all your *vast Possessions* to *Six Foot of Earth*, what will become of all these *little Trifles*, by which you value your *selves* so highly? Where now will be the *Beauty*, the *Wealth*, the *Port* and *Garb*, of which you are so conceited? Alas, now that *Lovely Body* will look as pale and ghastly; that *Lofty Soul* will be left as *bare*, as *poor* and *naked*, as your *despised Neighbour's*; and shou'd you now meet his *Wandering Ghost* in the *vast World of Spirits*, what will you have left to boast of more than he; now that your *Beauty* is withered, your *Wealth* vanished, and all your *outward Pomp* and *Splendour* buried in a silent Grave? Now you will have nothing left to distinguish you from the *most Contemptible*, unless you have *wiser* and *better Souls*, which are the only *Preheminencies* above other Men, that will survive our Funerals, and distinguish us from *base* and *abject Souls* for ever. If we are *now more pious*, and *humble*, and *just* and *charitable*, than other Men, this will stick by us when our Heads are laid, and to all Eternity render us *Glorious* and *Happy*. And indeed, when once we have thrown off our Body, and all our *bodily Passions* and *Necessities*, the only *Goods* we shall be capable of enjoying, are *God*, our *selves*, and the *Society of Blessed Spirits*; and these are no otherwise enjoyable, but only by *Acts of Piety* and *Vertue*.

It is only by our *Contemplation* and *Worship*, our *Love* and *Imitation* of God, that we can enjoy him; it is only by our *Prudence* and *Moderation*, our *Temperance* and *Humility*, that we can enjoy our selves; it is only by our *Charity* and *Justice*, our *Modesty*, *peaceable* and *mutual Submission* and *Condescension* to one another, that we can enjoy the *Glorious Society of Blessed Spirits*: But if our *unbodied Spirits* carry with them these *Divine Graces* into the other World, we shall by them be possess'd of every thing our utmost Wishes can propose; of a *good God*, a *Godlike*, *joyous* and *contented Mind*, a *peaceful*, *kind* and *righteous Neighbourhood*; and so all above, within and without us, will be a *pure* and *perfect Heaven*. So that if when I go from hence, to seek my Fortune in the World of Spirits, God should thus bespeak me: *O Man! Seeing thou art now leaving all the Enjoyments of Sense, consult what will do thee good, and thou shalt have whatever thou wilt ask, to carry with thee into the spiritual State.* I say, should God thus offer me, I am sure, the utmost Good I could wisely crave, would be this: *Lord, give me a Heart inflamed with Love, and winged with Duty to thee, that thereby I may enjoy thee; give me a sober and a temperate Mind, that thereby I may enjoy my self; give me a kind, and peaceable, and righteous Temper, that thereby I may enjoy the sweet Society of blessed Spirits: O give me but these blessed Things, and thou hast crowned all my Wishes; and to Eternity I will never ask any other Favour for my self, but only this, that I may continue a holy and a righteous Soul for ever: For so long as I continue so, I am sure, I shall enjoy all spiritual Goods, and be as happy as Heaven can make me.* What a prodigious Piece of Folly therefore is it, for Men to value themselves more upon these outward Advantages, of which e're long they must be stript; than upon the Graces and Vertues of their own Minds, on which they must subsist for ever? Suppose now you were a Merchant in a far Countrey, where you were allowed for a short uncertain Time, the Benefit of Free Trade and Commerce, in order to your gaining a good Estate to maintain you in your Native Countrey, when ever you are forced to return; would you be so indiscreet, as to lay out all the Product of your Merchandice in building Fine Houses, and purchasing Great Farms, when you know not how soon you may be commanded to depart, and leave all the Immovable Goods behind you? Or rather, would you not think your selves obliged by all the Rules of Interest and Discretion, to convert all your Gain into portable Wealth, into Money or Jewels, or other such *movable Commodities*, as, when ever you are forced to depart, you might carry Home along with you, and there maintain your selves with them in many Years Ease and Plenty? Do but think then, and think it often, that while you live here, you are but Strangers, and Foreign Merchants; that you came hither from another World, to which, you know not how soon you may be forced to return; that all the Weakth, the Lands and Houses you gain by your present Commerce, are

immovable Goods, which you must leave behind you when you go from *hence*, and that there is nothing portable of all that you can gain in this World, but only the Graces and Vertues of your Minds ; and that therefore while you have Opportunity, it concerns you, above all things, to Store and Treasure up a Plentiful Portion of These ; that so whenever you are Shipp'd off into the *Eternal* World, you may carry such an Estate of them thither with you, as may suffice to maintain you there in Glory and Happiness for ever. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant.

DIS-

DISCOURSE IX.

UPON

I JOHN iii. 9.

*Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin ;
for his Seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin,
because he is born of God.*

FOR the right understanding of these Words, it will be necessary to enquire,
First, What is here meant by *Sin* ; *Secondly*, What is meant by being *born*
of God ; *Thirdly*, In what Sence he that is *born of God* cannot commit
Sin.

First, What is here meant by *committing Sin* ? I answer, that this Phrase in the Writings of this our *Apostle* hath a special *Energy* ; and doth not denote the *simple* doing of any *sinful* Action whatsoever *deliberately*, *wilfully*, and *presumptuously*. For, as for the *First*, it is not true, that he that is *born of God* doth commit no *sin* at all ; seeing the *best* of God's Children are liable to be surpriz'd into *evil* Actions through their *Weakness*, *Ignorance*, or *Inadvertency* ; of all which, there are *some* Remains even in the most *purified* Natures. And as for the *Second*, viz. the *Habit* of sinning wilfully ; tho' that in the *Apostle's* Sence, is not only to commit *Sin*, but to commit it in the most *eminent* Degree ; yet it is plain, that it is the *deliberate* Acts of *Sin* that he here primarily intends : For so Verse the 4th, *He that committeth Sin, transgresseth the Law : For Sin is a Transgression of the Law* ; which is plainly meant of every *single* Act of wilful *Sin*. So Ver. 8. *He that committeth Sin, is of the Devil* ; that is, he is therein an Imitator of the *Devil* ; which is true of every *deliberate* Act, as well as of this *Habit* of *Sin*. So here in the Text, *He that is born of God, doth not commit Sin* ; that is, understanding him still in the same Sence, he doth not commit any *wilful* and *deliberate* Act of *Sin*.

2. Our next Enquiry is, what is here meant by *being born of God* ? To which I answer, that to be *born of another*, denotes in general, our recovering the Beginning and Principle of our Life and Motion from him ; and consequently, to be *born of God*, is to receive from him through the Operation of his Grace and Spirit, the Beginning and Principle of our *spiritual* Life and Motion, viz. a *considerate*, *universal*, *prevailing* Resolution to obey God, proceeding from our Belief of the *Christian* Religion. When therefore God, by the Influence of his Grace and Spirit, hath wrought our Minds into such a Resolution, then are we truly born of him, as having herein received from him the Principle of a *new* Life and Motion. And this the *Apostle* expresses, by *being transformed by the renewing of our Mind*, Rom. 12. 2. i. e. having a *new practical* Judgment and Resolution of Soul begotten in us ; and this he elsewhere calls *the renewing of the Holy Ghost*. Tit. 3. 5. Upon which account we may very well be said, to be *born of God* ; because it is from his *blessed Spirit* that we derive this *Renewing*, which is the Principle of our *spiritual* Life and Motion.

Our

Our *last* Enquiry, is, in what Sence *this* Assertion of the Apostle holds, *viz.* That he who is *thus* born of God, cannot sin? To which I answer, That this Expression, *he cannot*, relates to the State he is *now* in; he *cannot*, as he is *one* that is born of God, and while he doth continue so: For so the *Phrase* is frequently used in Scripture. So *Pom.* 8. 7. *The carnal Mind cannot be subject to God*: Not but the Mind which is *now* carnal, may *hereafter* be subject unto God, *viz.* when it is *renewed* and *changed*; but it cannot be so while it continues *carnal*. And in the same Sence, he tells us in the next Verse, that it *cannot please God*. So *Mat.* 7. 18. *a good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit, neither can a corrupt Tree bring forth good Fruit*; which can import no more than this; that whilst the *good Tree* continues good, it cannot bring forth *evil Fruits*, nor the *corrupt Tree* bring forth *good Fruits*, whilst it continues corrupt: Not but that *one* may *hereafter* become *evil*, and bring forth *evil Fruits*, as well as the *other* may become a *good Tree*, and bring forth *good Fruits*. So that the Meaning of *he cannot sin*, is no more than this; it is so *utterly* inconsistent with the State of *one* that is *born of God*, to sin wilfully and deliberately, that whenever he doth so, he actually falls from that *blessed State*, and for the time ceases to be born of God. And hence the Reason assigned why a Man cannot sin wilfully, and be *born of God* at the same Time, is, *for his Seed remaineth in him*; that is, because that Principle of *new Life* and Motion, which the *divine Spirit* hath produced in him, and which is nothing else but an universal, *prevailing* Resolution of obeying God, remains within his Breast: And for a Man to be *universally* and *prevalently* resolved to obey God, and at the same Time to sin wilfully, is a *Contradiction* in Terms; because whenever he sins wilfully, he is *prevalently* resolved to disobey him. And therefore seeing in every wilful Sin we are *prevalently* resolved to *disobey* God, while we are so, our Resolution to obey him, which is the Seed and Principle of our *Divine Life*, must necessarily be extinguished; and consequently, till such time as by our Repentance, we have *reviv'd*, and *recover'd* it, we must cease to be *born of God*. He therefore who is *born of God*, cannot sin wilfully; because while he continues in this State, *his Seed remains in him*: Which is no more reconcilable to our *sinning wilfully*, than *Contraries* are in the same Degree. And therefore he adds, *he cannot sin, because he is born of God*; that is, his State is such as will no more admit him wilfully to disobey God, than to be *dead* and *alive* in the same Moment. But in pursuance of this Argument, it will be necessary, yet further to enquire, what those *wilful Sins* are, which the Apostle here declares to be inconsistent with a *good State*; or which is the same thing, with our being *born of God*; the Resolution of which is of absolute necessity to enable Men to make a *true Judgment* of their own State, whether it be *good* or *bad*. And in order hereunto, it will be necessary to premise the following Particulars:

1. That by *wilful Sin*, I mean the *Acts*, as well as the *Habits* of Sin.
2. That by *wilful Habits* of Sin, I mean, such as are contracted by *wilful Acts*, and are wilfully retained and indulged.
3. That by *wilful Acts* of Sin, I do not mean all *evil Actions*, which have any Degree of *Will* in them; but only such as are deliberately chosen.
4. That the same Actions may be Sins of *Weakness*, and Sins of *Wilfulness* in the same, or different Persons under different Circumstances.

1. That by *wilful Sins*, I mean the *wilful Acts*, as well as *Habits* of Sin. To be sure, there is no Sin can be consistent with our being *born of God*, for which the Gospel binds us over to *eternal* Condemnation: For while we *thus* stand bound, we are Children of *Wrath*, and so cannot be Children of God at the same time. Now the Law of *Christ* condemns us for all *wilful Sins* whatsoever, whether they be *single Acts* or *Habits*; and every *single wilful Act* is as much a Transgression of the Law, which threatens Condemnation, as any *wilful Habit* whatsoever. The Law, which forbids *wilful Lying*, under the Penalty of *eternal* Death, doth as well for-

forbid the *single* Act, as the Habit of *wilful* Lying ; and therefore must forbid them both under the same Penalty : And indeed, if it did not, there are some of the most *heinous* Sins would escape. For there are *some* Sins, which when Men have *once* committed, they never have Opportunity to repeat ; being prevented either for want of a *new* Occasion, or by *just* Sentence of Law ; such as *Rape*, and *Theft*, and *Murther* : And *others*, which can never pass beyond a *single* Act ; such as *Parricide* and *Self-murther* ; and so can never grow into an Habit : And yet I think, there is no Man can doubt, but that even the *single* Acts of these Sins (supposing them *wilful*) do put a Man into a State of Condemnation. I know, it is usually said, that such *horrible* Sins as these indeed do so ; because the Mischief of them is *so* great, and the Malice *so* heinous, that it renders them *equivalent* to an *Habit* of any other Sin. To which I answer, the Law of *Christ* condemns these Sins, not as they are greater than *others* ; but as they are Transgressions, for which it threatens Condemnation. Indeed, the Greatness of the Sin doth increase the Condemnation ; but yet the Law which condemns us for a *lesser* Sin ; doth as certainly condemn us, as *that* which condemns us for a *greater*. As for Instance, the Law of *Christ* as well condemns us for *Drunkenness*, *Adultery*, *Lying*, and *Malice*, as for *Murther*. And as every *wilful* Act of *unjust* Killing, is *Murther* ; so every *wilful* Act of *Adultery* and *Malice*, is *Adultery* and *Malice* : And therefore the Law of *Christ* condemns to far *greater* Pains for the one than the *other* ; yet still it condemns us for both : For that Law, which forbids any *wilful* Sin indifferently, under the Penalty of Condemnation, forbids every Act of it under the *same* Penalty ; because every Act of it is the Sin so forbidden : And therefore we may as well say, that the Law of *Christ* doth not condemn us for *Parricide* and *Self-murther*, because these are only *single* Acts of *Murther* ; as that it doth not condemn us for any other *single* Act of any other *wilful* Sin. For every *single* Act of *wilful* Intemperance and Incontinency, are as truly Sins against the Law, which forbids them under the Penalty of *eternal* Condemnation, as those *single* Acts of *Murther* are against the Law, which forbids *Murther* under the same Penalty ; and consequently, do as well put us into a State of Condemnation : And to be sure, while we are in *this* State, we cannot pretend to be *born of God*.

2. I premise, that by *wilful* *Habits* of Sin are meant, such as are contracted by *wilful* Acts, and are wilfully retained, and indulged. For if you take *Habits* of Sin in the *largest* Sence, as they signify a *forward* Propensity, Promptness, and Readiness to *do* Evil, there is no doubt, but there may be *sinful* *Habits* in Men, which never were contracted by *wilful* Acts : As on the contrary, there may be *sinful* *Habits* contracted by *wilful* Acts, which tho' not utterly extirpated, may yet cease to be *wilful*. As for Instance, a Man may be prompted to *unreasonable* Anger, or *excessive* Lust, even from the *natural* Temper and Constitution of his Body, without the Concurrence of any *wilful* Acts of his own : And tho' he may be much more disposed to be angry or lustful, than *another* of a *cooler* Constitution ; yet he may be much farther removed from any *wilful* *Habit* of Anger and Lust ; because the *latter* perhaps, contracted them by his own *wilful* Acts, and by his repeated Practice of them, doth still cherish and indulge them : Whereas the *former* had no more hand in contracting them, than he had in the moulding of *his own* Constitution ; and is so far from cherishing them by any *wilful* Acts of his own, that it is the *main* Endeavour of his Life to oppose them. And so on the other hand, a Man that by frequent *wilful* Acts of Sin, hath contracted *wilful* *Habits*, may afterwards heartily repent, and take up a *prevailing* Resolution of Amendment ; and yet still the *evil* *Habit*, the *Promptness*, or *Propensity* to his Sin, may be more or less remaining in him : But this is *now* so far from being *wilful*, that the prevailing Bent and Current of his Will is against it : And tho' still his *evil* Inclinations are ready to take fire upon every *Spark* of Temptation that falls upon them, and to *blaze* out into *evil* Actions ; yet by the Strength of his Resolution he *so* keeps it under, that it cannot break forth but upon a Surprise ; and even *that* Surprise will render him more *watchful* and *vigilant* to suppress it for the future. But now when *evil* *Habits* do not only exist in us, but are also cherished

and indulged by us, and do ordinarily influence and govern our Practice; they are then not only *wilful* Sins, but a *fixt* and *settled* State of wilful Sins; and are pregnant with a *distinct* Guilt and Venom from those Acts of wilful Sin that begot them. And hence in Scripture you find them markt with the *blackest* Characters; they are called, *the Root of Bitterness, the evil Heart, and Concupiscence wrought by Sin, the Law in the Members*; which those who are carnal, and sold under Sin, do obey; *the carnal Mind, the Flesh in which dwells no good, and Enmity to God*: By all which they are sufficiently pronounced inconsistent with our being *born of God*.

3. I must premise, that by *wilful Acts of Sin*, I do not mean, all *wilful* Actions which have any Degree of *Will* in them: but only such as are deliberately chose and consented to. Every Sin is so far *voluntary*, as that when we chuse it, we are free to refuse it; otherwise it is necessary; and what is *necessary*, is no Fault, nor can be justly liable to *Reward, or Punishment*. Those *evil* Actions therefore, which, for Distinction sake, are called *Sins of Infirmary*, are no farther Sins, than as they are chosen, and have some Intermixture of Will in them: For if they have none, they have only the *Matter* of Sin in them, but not the *Form*. But we are seldom so surprized with any Temptation to *Evil*, but that it is possible for us to deliberate upon it; and thereupon to resolve against it; and many Times by our Care and Watchfulness, we do prevent those *Evils*, which, when we are more remiss, do steal upon us *unawares*: And we that can prevent them this Moment, can prevent them the *next* too, and so the next, and so *forever*. But then considering the *Weakness and Imperfection* of our Natures, how our *Wills* are byassed with *bad* Habits and Inclinations, and our *Thoughts* dispersed and squander'd among the *infinite* Diversions that surround us; it is morally impossible, that is, it is not reasonably to be expected, that in these Circumstances we should be always upon our Guard against every evil Object *without*, and every *evil* Motion *within* us, so as never to be surprized, or to act unadvisedly. Whenever therefore we are so surprized into an *evil* Action, as that we could not consider if we would, either for Want of Time, or for Want of *Order and Distinction* in our Thoughts, occasioned by some *sudden* Tumult of Passion; *this* is not our Fault, but our Infelicity; because our Will is no way concerned in it. But when we are so surprized, as that notwithstanding, we might have considered, had we taken all *due* Care to recollect *ourselves*, and exert our *utmost* Attention; *this* is partly our Fault; because there is something of Will in it; but more our Infelicity; because there is more of Weakness and Infirmary than Will in it; and therefore is called a *Sin of Infirmary*; which by the *merciful* Indulgence of the Gospel, is discharged of Course, from all *eternal* Penalties. But if when we are tempted, we either designedly omit to consider, or consent upon Consideration; this is pure Malice of Will; which, while we are *born of God*, can have no Place in us.

4. And Lastly. I must premise, that the same Actions may be *Sins of Weakness* and *Sins of Wilfulness* in the *same*, or in *different* Persons under different Circumstances. For seeing it is the *willing* of an *evil* Action that makes it be a Sin, it necessarily follows, that it is the *willing* of it in a *greater* or a *lesser* Degree, that makes it a *greater* or a *lesser* Sin: And it is certain, that the same Sin may have more or less of Will in it in the *same*, or *different* Persons under different Circumstances. As for Instance; *one* Man may be excusably ignorant of the *Evil* of such an Action, which *another* doth either know to be a Sin, or would have known it, had he not been willfully ignorant; and that *Sin*, which *this* Man commits upon Deliberation, *another* may be hurried into on a sudden Surprize; in which Case, tho' both do the same Act, and in some Sence, both do it willingly too; yet because the one wills it more intently than the other, it is a *Sin of Wilfulness* in the one, and a *Sin of Infirmary* in the other. And this holds true also in the *same* Person, who may do the same Action ignorantly and inconsiderately at *one* Time, and knowingly and advisedly at *another*; and if when he hath fallen into any Sin unawares, he is wilfully careless and neglective to prevent the Return of it; that which

which *now* is a *pitiab* Weakness, and as such, falls under the *general* Indulgence of the Gospel, will *anon* be *inexcusable* Obstinacy. From all which it is apparent, that it is not the Kind of the Sin, but the *Will* of the Sinner, that makes the Difference between *Sins of Weakness* and *Wilfulness*; seeing the same Sins according to the *different* Degrees of Will that are in them, may be *Sins of Infirmity* at one time, and *Sins of Obstinacy* at another. For so by the *Law of England*, the same Act of *Killing* is distinguished into *Chance-medly*, *Man-slaughter*, and *Murder*; the *first* of which is *Innocent*, because it hath no Will in it; the *second* *Pitiable*, because but imperfectly willed; the *third* *Capital*, because freely chosen, and fully consented to. And so also, by the *Christian Law*, the very same Act under *different* Circumstances, may be an *innocent* Error, a *Sin of Infirmity*, and a *Sin of Wilfulness*: For if it be perfectly involuntary, it is an *innocent* Error; if imperfectly willed, it is a *Sin of Infirmity*; but if fully consented to, a *Sin of Wilfulness*. So long therefore as the Temptations of Men are so infinitely *various*, and their Capacities of resisting so *unequal*, in different Persons, there will be *more or less* of Will in the *same* Actions; and the same Act will be far more excusable, where there is a *greater* Temptation to it, and a *less* Power of resisting, than it can be, when the Temptation is *less*, and the Power of resisting it *greater*. All that can be done therefore, in the Case before us, is this, to lay down such *general* Rules of Distinction between *Sins of Infirmity*, and *Sins of Wilfulness*, as that thereby every Man, that hath the *free Use* of his own Faculties, may upon a *due* Consideration of his *Particular* Circumstances, distinguish whether his Sin be wilful or no. For when all is done, every Man must thus far be *his own Casuist*; it being impossible for *another* to determine what Degrees of *Will* there are in his Sin, unless he knew under what Circumstances he committed it; because *different* Circumstances do vary the Case, and make the Sin be *more or less* voluntary.

These Things premised, I come now particularly to state what those Sins are, upon the Commission of which we cease to be *born of God*: And these I shall rank under Three Heads: 1. Sins of wilful Ignorance. 2. Sins of wilful Inconsideration. 3. Sins against *Knowledge* and *Consideration*.

1. Sins of wilful Ignorance; I say, wilful, to exclude all *invincible* and *unaffected* Ignorance: By *invincible* Ignorance, I mean such, as we neither do, nor can surmount, by the *utmost* Improvement we can make of our Reason. For sure, not to understand, *what* we cannot understand, is not at all *criminal*; and if our Ignorance be *innocent*, whatever is the *necessary* Effect of it, must be so too; all *necessary* Effects being of a *common* Nature with their Causes. And certainly, no Man breathing can be innocent, if he be not so, who acts to the *best* of his Knowledge, and knows to the *best* of his Capacity. For so our Saviour himself pronounces concerning the Pharisees; *If ye were blind, ye should have no Sin; but now you say, that you see; therefore your Sin remains*, John 9. 4.

By *unaffected* Ignorance, I mean, such as is *vincible*; but by Reason of some *innocent* Hindrances, such as the Obscurity of the Object, or the Weakness of the Capacity, or the *innocent* Prejudice and Prepossession of the *Understanding*, is not to be removed without *extream* Difficulty; which, tho' it be so far sinful, as it is within the *Reach* of our Power to be better informed; yet is by no means to be accounted a wilful Sin. For if it be wilful Sin not to know and to do the Will of God to the *utmost* of our Power, there is no Sin in the World but what is wilful; because it is no Sin at all not to do more than our utmost. But then there is a *wilful* and *affected* Ignorance, which proceeds either from our *prophane* Contempt and Regardlessness of God, by which we have so far extinguished our *natural* Sense of Religion, as not to think it *worth* the while to concern our selves about it, and so rudely stop our Ears against all the *Means* of Instruction; or else, this wilful Ignorance arises from some *sinful* Prejudice against the Knowledge of the Truth begotten in us by some *darling* Lust; which, that we may quietly enjoy without any *Remorse* of Conscience, we industriously shun all the Means of Conviction; and either exclude all Thoughts of Religion from our Minds, lest they should discover

ver to us the *Evil* and *Danger* of our Sin, (which is the way of those who are openly *prophane* and *irreligious*;) or endeavour to wheedle our own Understandings, to such *false* Opinions, as are *soft*, and *easy*, and *indulgent* to our Lusts, (which is the way of *Hypocrites* and *false* Pretenders to *Religion*.) Now, as for this Sort of Ignorance, it springs from a *wicked* Will, and is not so much to be imputed to the *Weakness* of our Understandings, as to the *Depravedness* of our Affections; they are the *impure* Vapours from *below* that cloud the Sky *above*, and overcast the intellectual *Region* with *Darkness* and *Confusion*. And if we are ignorant of our Duty, because we will not be informed; our Ignorance is so far from excusing our Neglect of it, that it self is *inexcusable*. If I commit a Sin, because I am *wilfully* ignorant, the *Willfulness* of my Ignorance makes my Sin to be *wilful*. Here the Effect always partakes of the Nature of the Cause, and derives into it self all its *Venom* and *Malignity*; and therefore if my Ignorance be *wilful* Sin, whatever Sins it betrays me into, they must be all *wilful* as well as that. And hence our Saviour tells us, that *this is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men love Darkness rather than Light*, John 3. 19.

2. Another sort of *Wilful* Sins, are Sins of *wilful Inconsideration*. I say *wilful*; because there are sundry Evils whereinto we are perfectly surprized; as, when Temptations start out so suddenly upon us, as that either for want of Time, or the great Hurry and Tumult it puts our Thoughts into, is not in our Power to consider and deliberate; in which Case we are not capable Subjects of *Law* and *Morality*. For that which makes us capable Subjects, is, first, that we are *Rational* Agents, and so can deliberate what is best to chuse. 2. That we are *Free* Agents, and so can chuse what is best upon Deliberation; without which, Mad-men and Natural Fools are as capable Subjects of *Law* as we. Whenever therefore our Circumstances are such, that we cannot deliberate, and chuse upon Deliberation, tho' the Actions we do, are materially Evils; yet are they not formally Sins; because while we do them, we are not capable Subjects of the *Law* that forbids'em, nor consequently, accountable to it. As for instance; it is doubtless, a Great Sin, and deserves a Great Punishment, for a Man to wound his Friend, or abuse his Benefactor: But yet in a Mad-man it is no Sin at all; because when he doth it, he is incapable of being govern'd by the *Law* that forbids it. And this, I judge, is the Case of Men under perfect Surprizes, when they are violently hurried into *evil* Actions, in a *sudden* Distraction and Confusion of Thoughts; which doubtless, may sometimes be the Case of very *good* Men, especially under great Pains, or the sudden Appearance of *frightful* Dangers, which for the present, at least, may distract and scare them out of all Capacity and Deliberation: And at other times, while their Thoughts are innocently wandring among the Vast Variety of Outward Objects, a Temptation may suddenly break in, and prevail upon them, before they have time to recollect themselves. For we find by Experience, that the *Mind* hath not an *Absolute* Dominion over the *Will*, as to make it chuse or refuse at its Beck, upon the bare Proposal of *good* or *evil* Objects; but many times, before it can prevail, is fain to dispute it out with our Passions and Appetites, and to oppose their Importunities with more prevalent Motives to the contrary: And therefore if it shou'd fall out, that in that Moment when the Temptation comes, the Mind shall be very much *diverted* by other Employments; it is in many Cases *morally* impossible, but *Passion* and *Appetite* should prevail, and obtain our Consent, before the *Mind* is aware of it; because that being at present otherwise employed, and always unable to attend many Things at once, it cannot be ready in the present Exigence, immediately to urge the Arguments on its own side, and to detect the Fallacies on the other. Tho' this, I confess, will hardly hold in any *gross* Acts of Sin; because in these there is generally some *Pause* and *Interval* between the Temptation and the Action, wherein the Mind may easily be advised with; which, if it be a *good* Mind, cannot fail to suggest sufficient Arguments against it: But if the Temptation doth so hurry the Man, as that he cannot deliberate, he is so far innocent: And if as soon as he considers, he retracts the *evil* Consent into which his Will was surprized, before it passes into Action; or if

if having *acted* it before he was aware, he becomes more wary and watchful for the future, it is not so much his Fault as his Misery. 'Tis true, there are Surprizes of Temptations, which are not innocent : But then the Reason is, because they are not pure Surprizes ; but such as do not incapacitate us to deliberate : And if when it is in our Power, we either do not deliberate at all, or not enough ; but make a rash and foolish Choice, when, if we had used our utmost Care, we might have chosen more advisedly ; our Choice is culpable, and so is the Action thence proceeding. But seeing ours is the Religion of *Men*, and not of *Angels* ; and it cannot reasonably be expected, considering our Circumstances, that we shou'd always do as well as possibly we can, it is to be supposed, that this Religion of ours, which is purposely accommodated to our imperfect State, admits of us to be *good* in the *main*, tho' we are not so to *Perfection* ; or, which is the same thing, to the utmost of our Possibility. For while our Soul is fain to minister to a Body, and hath so quick a Sence of its Necessities ; and while we are encompass'd with so vast a Variety of Tempting Objects, and our Thoughts are so dispersed and squander'd amongst 'em, it is *morally* impossible, but that many of our Actions shou'd be unadvised, and pass our Watch, without a *severe* Examination : Nor can it reasonably be expected, that we should in all Cases, where it is in our Power, so precisely weigh every *minute* Circumstance of our Actions, as to determine exactly on which side our Duty lies : And therefore should our Religion *exact* this of us, without any Mitigation or Abatement, I doubt, that even the *best* of Men wou'd never be able to abide the Test of it. But then, besides this kind of Inconsideration, which is either purely *involuntary*, and by consequence *innocent*, or but partly *voluntary*, and so *excusable* ; there is *another Sort* of it, which is absolutely and inexcusably *wilful*. And this is twofold, *viz.* *Actual* and *Habitual*. Actual is either when, notwithstanding we have been sufficiently forewarned by *precedent* Surprizes, we are *wilfully* neglective of our selves, and take no Care to fortifie our Minds by *Consideration* against them, in case they should return again upon us ; or when upon the Appearance of a prevailing Temptation, we either quench the *good Motions* of *our own* Consciences, and refuse to consider the *Evil* and *Danger* of the Sin we are tempted to, lest we should be deterr'd from committing it ; or purposely contrive to baffle *our own* Consideration, and to render it ineffectual, by opposing against it, either some ungrounded Hope of Impunity, or some fallacious Promise of future Amendment : In all which Cases our *Inconsideration* is apparently *wilful*, and so consequently must the Sins be which follow upon it : And he who pleads his own *wilful Inconsideration*, as an Excuse for his Sin, doth only Apologize for *one* Fault by *another* ; which, instead of extenuating, inflames and aggravates it. And then, as for *habitual Inconsideration*, it is the Effect of our frequent stifling the Convictions of our own Consciences, whereby we sear them into a *deep* Insensibility of Good and Evil, so as that at last we sin on without Remorse, and return to our Lusts with a perfect Indifferency, without ever considering what we do, or reflecting upon what we have done. Now as it is no Excuse for our Sin, if it proceeds from a sinful Habit, contracted by frequent Acts of *wilful Sin* ; so neither will it excuse our Sin, that it proceeds from an *habitual Inconsideration*, contracted by often refusing to consider. And as *vicious* Habits have a proper Evil and Guiltiness in them, distinct from those *vicious* Acts that produce them ; so *habitual Inconsideration* hath in it a peculiar Venom of its own, beyond what was in those *wilful* Acts of Inconsideration, whereby it was contracted. And accordingly, in *Scripture* it is described as the most desperate State of Sinners : It is to be *past feeling* ; which was the Condition of the *lewdest* and most *irreclaimable* Gentiles, *Eph.* 4. 19. It is to have a *seared Conscience*, the Character of Sinners under the *Last Apostacy*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 2. It is to have a *reprobate* Mind, which was the Cause and Effect of the *foulest* Gentile Impieties, *Rom.* 1. 28, 29. In a Word, it is to have a *hard* and *unrelenting* Heart, by which Men are said to *treasure up Wrath* against the Day of Wrath, *Rom.* 2. 5.

3. And Lastly, Another Sort of wilful Sins, are such as are wilfully committed against *Knowledge and Consideration*. I say again, wilfully, to exclude those known Evils, which either we do not at all consent to, or very imperfectly. For it is a *known* Evil for a Man to *rove* in his Devotions, or to think *blasphemous* Thoughts of God, or to be *drowsie* and *listless* in our Addresses to him; and yet many times these are the *necessary* Effects even of innocent Causes; such as *Melancholy*, or *Weariness*, or *antecedent Thoughtfulness*; and therefore, tho' they are Evil in the Matter; yet because they necessarily proceed from such Causes as are not Evil, we are no more accountable for them, than for the Returns of our Appetite, or the Palpitation of our Heart: And if we do not indulge our Drowsiness, nor harbour and entertain our Evil Thoughts; but throw them out of our Minds, as soon as we observe them, and keep a more careful Watch to prevent their Return, our Will is *innocent*, and so long we may be sure, *God* will not condemn us for our Weakness. Again, it is a *known* Evil for a Man to be angry *without a Cause*, or to have an *unlawful* Desire, or to *love*, or *hate* or *hope*, or *fear*, or *rejoice*, or *grieve* unreasonably; yet these Evils are such as *no* Care can wholly prevent, and against which *no* Watchfulness is a *sufficient* Guard.

And tho' in many of these Instances there be many times *so much* of our Will intermingled, as to render us culpable; yet this is not sufficient to extinguish the Principle of our *Regeneration*, or to degrade us into a State of *Wickedness*. But when a Man knows that such an Action is *evil*, and either actually considers that it is so, or neglects to consider it through *habitual Inconsideration*, and thereupon actually consents to it; he doth hereby openly *defie God*, and maliciously trample upon his Authority; being desperately resolved to pursue his *sinful* Desire, let God and his Conscience say what they can to the contrary: Which is such an Height of wilful Malice, as no *Apology* can extenuate. Hence our Saviour pronounces, that *the Servant that knows his Master's Will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many Stripes*, Luke 12. 47. And accordingly, St. James tells us, that he that *knows to good, and doth it not, to him it is Sin*; that is, 'tis a very great and *inexcusable* Sin, James 4. 17. And St. Paul assures us, that *the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness, and Unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness*; that is, who know the Truth, and yet wilfully sin against their Knowledge. Rom. 1. 18. And to name no more, Heb. 10. 26. We are told, that *if we sin wilfully after we have received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin*. Which Words are to be understood according to the general Analogy of the Gospel [*if we sin wilfully*] i. e. if we are deliberately guilty of any known Sin [*after we have received the Knowledge of the Truth*] i. e. have been *catechized* and *baptized* in the *Christian* Faith [*there remains no more Sacrifice for sin*] i. e. unless we recover our selves by Repentance, and Amendment of the Fact. And seeing that where we sin wilfully, the Vertue of the great *Sacrifice* for Sin hath no Place, without a *special* and *particular* Repentance; and consequently, there is no *other* Remedy left for us in the Gospel: All that remains, is what follows in the next Verse, *viz. a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and a fiery Indignation to devour the Adversary*. From whence it follows, that upon our *sinning knowingly and wilfully* in any *particular* Instance, we fall into a State of Wrath and Condemnation, and consequently, fall from the *happy* State of our *Regeneration*, or *being born of God*.

And now to conclude this Argument, from the whole I infer, the *horrible* Evil of consenting to any *known* Sin, after we have entered into *good* Resolutions to the contrary; which will plainly appear upon the following Considerations:

1. Consider the shameful Weakness and Impotency of it. For such Resolutions, if they are well formed, are grounded on the *strongest* and most *momentous* Reasons in the World: And for a Man to Cancel a Resolution enforced with such powerful Motives, for a *mere* Vanity; or to gratifie some foolish and importunate Lust, the *Pleasure* of which dies away in the *Enjoyment*, argues him to have a
base

base and prostitute Mind, that hath no Strength of *Thought*, or Steadfastness of *Will* in it ; but is wiffled up and down, like a Feather in the Air, by every little Counterblast of Wind.

2. Consider the *prodigious* Hazard to which we expose ourselves by it. For by every wilful Sin, after *such* a Resolution, we throw our selves headlong from the *best*, into the *worst* Estate in the World ; from a State of *Love*, into a State of *Wrath* ; from being *born of God*, to being a *Son of Perdition* : And if we thence be snatched away, before we have recovered our Relapse, (as who knows but we may,) we shall die *for ever*, and by one *desperate* Act of Folly, fall from Heaven into Hell. But suppose we should *survive* our Sin, and be allowed a Space of Repentance ; yet is it a mighty Hazard whether ever we make a *good* Use of it. For when by one wilful Sin we have made a Breach into our *good* Resolution, in all probability, *that* will open the Gap for *another* to follow, and that for *another*, till thereby our evil Habits at last recover their *full* Power, and then our *Will* and *Practice* will be laid open again into a common *Thoroughfare* of Iniquity. For when we consented to the *first* Sin, it was with a Promise of repenting immediately ; and upon the *same* Promise in all probability, upon the next Temptation, we shall consent to a *second*, and so to a *third* ; and by this Train the *Devil* will *tole us* on through a long Course of Sin, till at length our *Will* is *depraved* again, and our Conscience *seared*, and then we shall lay aside all Thoughts of Repentance.

3. Consider the *great* Sorrow and Remorse that must follow upon our Sin, in Case we should repent of it. For to be sure, before we can heartily repent of it, our Mind must be stung with many *severe* Reflections upon our own *wretched* Weakness and Impotence, and our Falseness and Perfidiousness to our *own* Engagements and Resolutions, upon the Affront we have given to our *good* God, and the vile Contempt we have offer'd to his most *righteous* Authority, and our ungrateful grieving his holy Spirit ; whereby, before we committed this Wickedness ; we are sealed *unto the Day of Redemption* : All which, if we have any thing of *good* Nature and Ingenuity ; and much more, if we have any the least Foot step or remains of the *divine* Seed, by which we were *born of God*, must necessarily create in us a most *pungent* Sorrow and Remorse, whenever we reflect upon it ; a Sorrow that will be much *more* than *equivalent* to the *highest* Pleasure we can hope for from any wilful Sin : And for a Man to commit such a Sin, upon a Presumption that he shall repent of it, when he cannot but foresee, if he be in his Wits, that his Repentance will cost him far *more* Sorrow than his Sin will yield him *Pleasure*, is all Folly and Madness.

4. Consider how much of *that* Ground we lose back by every *wilful* Sin, which by hitherto keeping true to our *good* Resolution, we had gotten against our *evil* Inclinations. Our *Religion* can never be easie to us, till in some good Measure we have mortified and extinguished our *depraved* Inclinations : For till then, in the whole Course of our *Religious* Practice, we shall row against the Stream, and be continually warring against, and doing Violence to *our selves*. But if when a Man hath once enter'd into a *good* Resolution, he takes care to pursue it, he will find by degrees his *bad* Inclinations decay and wear off ; and proportionably, as they decay, *Piety* and *Vertue* will grow *more* and *more* natural and easie to him. But when a Man hath for some time faithfully pursued his *good* Resolution, and hath thereby got a great deal of Ground of his *bad* Inclinations ; if then he unravels it by any one wilful Act of Sin, his *bad* Inclinations will thereby recover all those Degrees of Strength and Vigour which they lost in the *past* Course of his *Piety* and *Vertue* : So that now he must be forced to begin the *whole* Work of his Religion again, and to struggle through all those Difficulties, which he had surmounted. Now he must fight over again all the Victories he had gotten, before he can regain *that* Command and *Empire* of himself, to which he was arrived before he revolted from his *good* Resolution ; and thus for a *Moment's* Satisfaction, he foolishly creates himself a *long* and *tedious* Labour.

5. And Lastly, Consider, how by every *wilful Sin* you will weaken and impair those comfortable Hopes you had arriv'd to, by persevering in your *good Resolution*. While you *persevere* in well-doing, your Minds will be all along entertain'd and refresh'd with the *growing Hopes* of your Reconciliation with God at present, and of a glorious Immortality to succeed: And those Blessed Hopes will every Day improve upon your Hands, till at length they are ripened into a *full Assurance*; the Comfort which will mightily spirit and enliven all your Religious Endeavours, and carry you on with indefatigable Vigour through all the weary Stages of your Duty. But now by committing of any *wilful Sin*, thereby you throw yourselves out of the Arms of God's Favour, and give up all your Pretensions to Eternal Happiness: And tho' by your serious Repentance you shou'd afterwards recover to the Blessed Condition from whence you were fallen; yet in all Probability, it will be a great while before you will be able to recover those Blessed Hopes from whence you are fallen. For the Sence of your past Lapse, if you have any Modesty in you, will make you very Anxious and Doubtful of your selves, and render you extreamly Fearful and Suspicious, lest you should fall again; and so only *sin* and *repent*, and *repent* and *sin* on, till at length you have sinned your selves beyond Repentance; and these very Just Fears and Jealousies will very much hinder the Growth of your Hopes, and cause them to spring by *slow and insensible Degrees*.

DISCOURSE X.

UPON

JOHN xiv. 27.

*Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you :
Not as the World giveth, give I unto you : Let not
your Heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

THESE Words are a Part of our Saviour's Farewel Discourse to his Disciples ; in which, after he had given them some *necessary* Instructions for the Information of their Faith, and Conduct of their Manners, in which, after he had comforted them, with the Assurance, that e're long he would return again to them by his Holy Spirit, and assist them in their Work, and support them under their Troubles, he takes a solemn Leave of them, *Peace I leave with you.* Which, among the *Hebrews*, was the usual Form of Salvation, when they met, or parted, *Shalom Lacha, Peace be unto you.* Where, by *Peace*, they meant all manner of Blessings : so that it was equivalent to all those Three *Salutations* among the *Greeks*, χαίρειν, εὐχαίρειν, εὐπερίτλειν, in which they wished to each other *Satisfaction of Mind, Health of Body, and Success of Affairs.* So that in this Salutation, *Peace I leave with you*, our Saviour wishes all Good to his Disciples ; of which, *Peace*, strictly taken, is one of the principal Instances. Nor, saith he, do I only wish *Peace* to you in general ; but I give you my *Peace*, or the Wish and Salutation of my *Peace* : Which is a much better Peace, than that which Men have hitherto enjoyed, an inward Peace of Mind and Soul, founded upon much surer Grounds and better Principles, than those which Natural Reason and Philosophy pretend to. And this new kind of Peace, which is properly mine, because founded upon my Principles, *I give unto you : not as the World giveth, give I unto you.* The Men of the World give the Salutation of *Peace* to each other many times out of mere Compliment, without any real Wish, or hearty Meaning ; and when they mean what they say, it is commonly nothing but an empty, impotent Wish, that conduces nothing, or at least, not enough, to the Peace and Satisfaction of those whom they salute. But as for my part, as I give you the Salutation of Peace ; so I heartily mean, and wish that you may enjoy it : Nor do I only wish you Peace ; but I have also taken care to furnish you with such abundant Means, and effectual Principles of Peace, as that if you are not extremely wanting to your selves, you cannot long be without it. The Words thus Explained, the Sence of them may be resolved into this Proposition :

That our Blessed Lord, as he heartily wishes *Peace* and *Quiet of Mind* to all his Disciples and Followers ; so he hath taken care to furnish them with the most sufficient and effectual Means to obtain it : The Truth of which, evidently appears, upon a full Consideration of these Two Particulars :

First, That he hath taken the most effectual Care to remove from us all the Causes of Trouble and Disquiet of Mind.

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Secondly,

Secondly, That he hath taken care to supply us with the most *effectual* Principles of Peace and Satisfaction of Mind.

1. I shall begin with the First of these, *viz.* That our Blessed Lord hath taken the most *effectual* Care to remove from us all the Causes of Trouble and Disquiet of Mind; and they are principally these Five:

1. The *Sence* of Guilt.
2. False and extravagant Estimations of the Good Things of the World.
3. Our taking up wrong Measures and Opinions of the Evils of the World.
4. An Effeminate Softness and Delicacy of Temper.
5. Misplacing our Happiness in Things that are out of our own Power.

1. One Cause of *Disquiet of Mind*, is the *Sence of Guilt*. For God hath imprinted such an *awful* Apprehension of his own *invisible Power and Majesty* on our *Minds*, that whenever we reflect upon the *manifold* Provocations we have given him, to arm his *Omnipotent* Vengeance against us, it must naturally suggest very *anxious and direful* Thoughts to our Minds, and fill us with black and horrible Apprehensions of the *Fatal* Consequents of his Wrath and Displeasure against us. So that till such time as Men have stupified their *natural Sence* of God, by a long Custom, and inveterate *Habit of sinning*; it will be as impossible for them to be at Peace under the Apprehension of his Displeasure, as it is to sleep with an *Alarm* in their Ears. But till such time as our *Saviour* had procured for us the *New Covenant*, by which God had solemnly obliged *himself* to pardon us upon our Repentance; *sinful* Men, tho' *true* Penitents, could never have arrived at that Degree of Security, that God was reconciled to them, as is necessary to set their Minds at rest, and *free* them from Anxiety. For tho' to repent, is the *best* thing a *Sinner* can do; yet this doth not at all alter the Nature of the *Sin* he repents of, so as to render it *less* evil, or *less* deserving of Punishment: And so long as the Desert of Punishment remains, God hath a natural Right to execute it; and so long we can never be certain whether he will exact it or no. Some wavering Hopes a poor Penitent might have arrived to, upon the Consideration of the infinite Benignity of the Divine Nature; but the utmost *Comfort* he could have given *himself*, was that of the penitent King of *Nineveh*; *Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce Anger, and we perish not?* *Jonah* 3. 9. But alas! When a Man's Mind is hagg'd and ridden with his Guilt, *who can tell?* is such a *poor Relief*, as must necessarily leave it extremely Anxious and Desponding. But now, upon our *Saviour's* procuring for us the *New Covenant*, you and I, and every one of us can tell, and that with as much Certainty, as that God is true, that if we do repent, and turn from our evil Ways, God will turn, and repent of his Anger and Displeasure against us. So that now, all we have to do, is to reflect upon our selves, and examine whether we are true Penitents or no; whether we have submitted our Will to God's, with a full Purpose and Resolution to fly whatever he forbids, and follow whatever he commands us; and if we have, we may upon the Terms of the *New Covenant*, from thence as certainly conclude, that he is reconciled to us; and that his high Displeasure against us, is all converted into the dearest Kindness and Complacency; as we can that he is God, or which is all one, that he is True and Faithful: Which, doubtless, is one of the most solid Foundations of Peace and Satisfaction in the World. For what can disturb me, while I feel my self lodged in his Arms and Embraces, whose Wisdom, I am sure, no Craft can out-wit, and with whose Power no Force is able to contend. Here I dwell as in an impregnable Fortrefs, where nothing can come at me, but what is for my Good: How then can any thing prove Adverse to me, while he is my Friend, in whose Hands and Disposal every thing that concerns me, is placed.

2. Another Cause of Disquiet of Mind, is, our False and Extravagant Estimations of the Good Things of this World. The main Spring of those Troubles which perplex our Minds, is the Goods and Evils that are without us, and without our

our Power and Disposal, in which we commonly fancy far more *Good* and *Evil*, than really there is. We look upon the *good* Things of this World, as *unskilful* Spectators do on *Landships*; in which while they stand at a Distance, they fancy they behold *here* a *smiling* Meadow, *there* a *delightful* Grove, and *there* a *lofty* Mountain; but upon a nearer Approach, and more *considerate* View, find all this *goodly* Prospect to be nothing but a *coarse* Canvas artificially painted with Colours and Shadows.

Thus, while we behold the *Riches*, the *Pleasures*, and the *Honours* of this World at a Distance, to our *wild* Imaginations there appear *vast* Mountains of Happiness in them, *fruitful* Fields of Pleasure, *delightful* Groves of Content and Satisfaction; which, while we are in the pursuit of them, fills our Minds full of Cares, and *anxious* and *sollicitous* Thoughts about them; but then, as we approach nearer to them, and come to survey them more closely, the Mountains presently dwindle into *Mole-hills*, the Fields and the Groves into *empty* Shadows; and after all our Labour and Care to possess our selves of them, our *Enjoyment* of them amounts not to the *Tithe* of our *Hope*; and so we are still restless and unsatisfied, both while we are in the Quest, and while we are in the Possession of them. While we are in the Pursuit of them, we are *wild* and *imaginative*; we swell with *fantastick* Joys, and juggle our selves into Expectations as great and eager as our *own* Desires; but as soon as we are possessed of them, we presently find their Vanity and Emptiness; and perceiving how *little* they are able to perform of those *vast* Things they promised us, our *abused* Fancy, that had raised it self with *high* and *swelling* Expectations, falls flat underneath the Disappointments of Fruition; and so while we are following, we are restless, and when we have overtaken them, we are dissatisfied: All which arises from those *extravagant* Estimations we make of them. Whereas did we but value them as they are, and according to the *true* Rules of *Reason* and *Religion*, we should pursue them with *far* more Indifference, and enjoy them with *far* more Content. While we are in pursuit of them, we should look upon them as Things without which we may be *happy*; and consequently, as Things that have not Worth enough in them to deserve of us any *mighty* Care or Sollicitude, and so we should follow them with a *calm* and *sedate* Mind; and entering into the Possession of them with a *moderate* Expectation, we should find every Thing in them, that we hoped for: For all the *Good* that they promised, they would be sure to perform; and so we should have no *disappointed* Hope to vex and disturb us; but our Expectation would be intirely satisfied in our Enjoyment. Thus, would we take care to fix in our Minds a *true* Estimation of the *good* Things of this World, and to prize them at those Rates that our Religion sets upon them, they would never be able to give us half the Disturbance they now do: For when we should look upon them as Things that are extrinsick to our Happiness, as Things that we may want without Damage, or enjoy without Advantage to our main Interest; and esteeming them as such, we should pursue them with much *less* Concern, and enjoy them with much *more* Satisfaction; We should not be vexed with such an impatient Desire of gaining them, nor alarmed with so many *tormenting* Fears of losing them; but with *St. Paul*, we should know both *how to want* them, and *how to abound* in them, and to undergo *both* Fortunes with a *calm*, and *cheerful* Mind.

3. Another Cause of Disquiet of Mind, is our taking up *wrong* Measures and Opinions of the *Evils* of the World. As for those *Evils* which are only the Object of our *Faith* and *Reason*, and such are the *eternal* *Evils* of the *other* World, we are apt to lessen and diminish them, and flatter our selves with *soft* and *easie* Apprehensions of them; but those that strike upon our Sence, we are ever prone to swell and magnifie them; which is the reason that the *former* disquiet us *too* little, and the *latter* *too* much; tho' our Disquiet for the one is necessary to prevent them; whereas our Trouble for the *other*, doth only serve to render them more grievous and oppressive. For the *greatest* Power these *outward sensible* *Evils* have to hurt and damage us, they derive from our *own* Imagination, which oftentimes disguises them in *grim* and *frightful* Vizards, and makes them appear to us a Thousand Times

more *terrible* than they are ; infomuch that the Prospect and Apprehension is generally more *grievous* to us, than the Sence and Experience of them ; and what we imagine in them, is far more, than what we feel. And thus we turn each *Whip* into a *Scorpion*, and swell our *Mole-hill* into a *Mountain* of Misery ; so that the greatest part of what we suffer, is generally of our own creating ; because we suffer not only the *real* Evils which are in the Things themselves, but which are commonly more, the *fantastick* too, which our Imagination forms and affixes to them. So that would we but take Care to strip *Realities* from *Fantastick*, it would be impossible for those *Evils* which we feel, or fear, to give us half the Disturbance that they do : And the only way for us to do this, is to take our Measures of these *outward* Evils, from *Religion* ; which will soon satisfy us, that they are nothing near so *formidable* in themselves, as we imagine them. For, as for Instance, what *mighty* Matter is there in the Loss of these *outward* Goods which are all so *extrinsic* to our Happiness, which cannot help us in our *greatest* Needs, nor make us easie in their *fullest* Enjoyment ; and which *Thousands* enjoy not, and yet are a Thousand Times more *happy* than those who possess them in the *greatest* Abundance ? Again, what *great Evil* is it for a Man to be contemned, and reproached, and vilified ? For as for these Things, they are *Good*, or *Evil*, as we please to fancy them ; and there is scarce any *other* Venom in them, than what *our own* Imagination doth infuse. If we think them *great Evils*, they will be sure to vex and discompose us ; which is the *greatest* Injury they can do us : But if we scorn and despise them, they are *impotent* Things, which, like *Wild-fire*, do only crack and vanish into Air, but leave no *formidable* Effects behind them. To name no more, what *mighty* Hurt is there in being *persecuted for Righteousness sake* ? Suppose I were banished from my Friends and *native* Country ; do I not see Men every Day undertake a *voluntary* Exile, and banish themselves into the *remotest* Parts of the World, only to get an Estate, or to learn Experience, or satisfy a Curiosity ? For all the difference between *one* and *the other*, is only this, that the *one* is forced, and the *other* voluntary ; and why the one should be worse than the *other*, there can be no *other* Reason assigned, but only this, that we imagine it so. Could we but cure our *erroneous* Fancy, such Banishment would be only a *more* advantageous Travel ; since doubtless, he who travels to save his Conscience and Innocence, and secure his Hopes of *everlasting* Bliss, makes the best Voyage in the World. Suppose, I should suffer a *close* Imprisonment, and be secluded from *Human* Conversation ; is it such a *deplorable* Thing for a Man to be kept within Doors, to be snatch'd out of the Crowd and Hurry of the World, and be forced to retire within himself, and converse with *God*, and *Heaven*, and *his own* Thoughts ? Are not these Company enough to entertain our Solitudes, and to supply the Want of the Noise of the World, in which there is commonly so much of Discord and Impertinence ? But then suppose the worst that you *can* suppose ; that you should suffer a *tormenting* Death, and be chased out of the World with the *severest* Instruments of *Human* Cruelty. It is certain, that e're long you must have died, whether you had suffer'd *Martyrdom* or no ; only now you die a little sooner, and so anticipate your *eternal* Happiness. And if you had died a *natural* Death, perhaps the Torment might have been much greater ; you might have languished much longer under the *Gout*, or *Stone*, or *Strangury*, than under the Hands of the Executioner ; and endured the *same* Degree of Torment, without the Comfort of dying in a *brave* Cause, and being assured of an *immortal* Recompence. Thus *Religion* sets the *Evils* of this World in a true Light, and represents them to us in their own *natural* Forms and Colours, without any of that *terrible* Pomp, in which our Imagination is so apt to dress and disguise them ; it assures us, that they are all design'd for our *good*, and are convertible into it ; and if we take Care to make a *wise* and *pious* Use of them, we shall be the better for them *for ever* ; it certifies us, that they can deprive us of no *Good*, but what, e're long we shall be insensible of *for ever* ; and by thus exposing these *Evils* naked to us, it shews us their Nakedness, and Impotence, and thereby deprives them of the Power they borrow of our *Fancies*, to disturb our Tranquillity and Peace.

4. Another Cause of Disquiet of Mind, is an *effeminate* Softness, and Delicacy of Temper, arising from our Neglect of exercising those *Vertues* which naturally tend to confirm and fortifie the Mind against *troublesome* and *disquieting* Accidents; such as *Faith*, *Patience*, and *Self-denial*, *Submission* and *Resignation* to God; which, when like so many *Guardian Angels*, they pitch their Tents about the Soul, are an *invincible* Defence to her against the Strokes and Impressions of Misfortune; and without which, she is left altogether *naked* and *unguarded*, amidst all the *disquieting* Accidents that surround her. For in the Absence of these *heavenly* Graces, a Man hath nothing wherewithal to resist any *Evil* that befalls him, but only the *insensible* Stupidity, and *brutal* Sturdiness of his Temper, which can never hold out long under any *pressing* Calamity; and when once these are broke, by the *repeated* Strokes and Impressions of *unfortunate* Accidents, the Man presently dissolves into Softness and Effeminacy: For now the *natural* Brawniness of Temper being worn away, like a Stone, with the continual Droppings of Rain, his Mind will become so *tender*, and *sore*, and *uneasie*, that every *little* Touch of Misfortune will pain and disturb him; in which Case he can derive no Relief from his Reason, having all along disused himself to advise and consult with it; and so every *Alarm* of Danger from *without*, presently raises a Tumult *within*, and puts his whole Soul into an Uproar; in which his Mind is left naked of all Relief, and utterly abandoned of those *wise* and *brave* Thoughts which should guard and defend it. But now, had he taken Care but to educate his Mind in the School of *Christianity*, that by instructing him in all those *manly* Vertues of *Patience* and *Temperance*, *Constancy* and *Resignation* to the Will of God, would have inspir'd him by Degrees with such an *invincible* Stayedness and Firmness of Spirit, as would have render'd his Peace and Tranquillity impregnable against all the Assaults of Misfortune. And when all is done, these *Vertues* are the *best* Protection we have against the Power of those *calamitous* Accidents that surround us. For when by *Temperance* a Man hath weaned himself from the Pleasures of the Body; when by *Patience*, he hath hardned himself against the Pains and Displeasures of it; when by *Constancy* to himself, he hath acquired a *continual* Presence of Mind, and ready Use of his Reason and Consideration; when by *frequent* Acts of *Resignation* to God, he hath reduced himself to an Habit of embracing every Accident, as a Token of Love, and bidding every Thing welcome that befalls him; when, I say, these *happy* Effects are produced in him, he is as safe and secure from the Disquieting Power of these *evil* Accidents below, as if he lived in the *uppermost* Regions of the Air; where he enjoys a *perpetual* Calm and Serenity, where he tramples upon Clouds, and is above all Storms; and with a *cheerful* and *composed* Mind, can sit securely, smiling at the *rolling* Thunder *below*, whilst it grumbles and bursts underneath his Feet. Thus will the *constant* Practice of these *excellent* Graces, so *steel* and *harden* our *tender* Minds, that those *Evils* will be able to make no Impression on us, which now do wound us to the Heart. For as the Light of the Sun, and Freshness of the Air, which are apt to offend the *Sickly* and *Tender*, are not only tolerable, but delightful to Men of *bale* and *vigorous* Constitutions; so many of the *little* Hardships which trouble and incommode the *Tender* and *Delicate*, are so far from disturbing *patient* and *temperate* Minds, that they rather refresh and divert them.

5. And Lastly, Another Cause of Disquiet of Mind, is our misplacing of our *own* Power. For Happiness is the *great* Load-stone that attracts and governs all our Motions, the Mark of all our Aims and Intentions, and the End of all our *deliberate* Actions. Whilst therefore we place our *Happiness* in Things that are out of our Power, we must be govern'd by Things that are out of our Power; and while we are so, we can never be quiet. For the Things that are out of our Power, being all of them *casual* and *contingent*, such as *Honour*, and *Greatness*, and *Carnal Pleasures*; we can never be secure of the Comfort and Happiness we place in them; and consequently, our *Happiness* and *Misery* must be as *casual* and *contingent* as the *Goods* and *Evils* are, from whence they do arise. And whilst we are governed by such *casual* Things as these, we can never be *our own* Men; but must

must live in Subjection to a *foreign* Power, and be what the Things that govern us, will have us; and so long as the Passions and Appetites that over-rule us, are over-ruled by the Chances and Contingencies without us, we must be as *various*, as *fickle* and as *multiform* as they. Whilst therefore we place our Happiness in these *uncertain* Enjoyments, it is impossible our Mind should ever be at Rest; but like a Ship in a *tempestuous* Sea, must be perpetually tossed and driven *to and fro*, by the *furious* Gusts of *our own* Passions; which can never be *calm* and *sedate*, till we fix upon a Happiness that is *certain* and *stable*: For as our *Desires* can never be satisfied, till we are compleatly happy; so our *Fears* can never be composed, till such time as we are secure of our Happiness. But so *empty* and *fickle* is all worldly *Good*, that we can never be *happy* in it, or secure of it: For when we have what we did first desire, that only inflames our Thirst, and makes us gasp for more; and then the Tenure of all is so *insecure*, that the Accession of more doth only increase our Fear of losing what we have. So that our Mind must be perpetually grounded between these *Two restless* Mill stones, the *Desire* of getting more, and the *Fear* of losing what we enjoy: And therefore, seeing it is impossible for us to alter the Nature of these *outward* Goods, or to render them either more secure, or more satisfying, the only way for us to be truly *happy*, is to alter the Temper of our *own* Minds, to wean them from this World, and determine them to an Happiness that is more Solid and Substantial, and within *our own* Disposal; and such a Happiness is that which *Christianity* proposes to us; an Happiness, that depends upon our own *free* Acts, and grows out of the *Graces* and *Vertues* of our own Mind. For so that *everlasting* Heaven which the *Gospel* proposes to us, is inseparably annexed to the *right* and *good* Use of our *natural* Liberty; and consequently, is as much within our Power, as *our own* Resolutions, and *voluntary* Motions. Whilst therefore we are under the Government of this *Christian* Happiness, we are Masters of *our own* Fortunes, and do live independently on Chance, and the Wills of Men; and it is within our own Power to be happy, without asking Leave of any, but *God* and *our selves*. Now, we are no longer *Tenants at Will* to the *little* Casualties and Accidents of the World, no longer liable to be turned out of our Happiness, by *Storms*, or *Fires*, or *Invasions*, by the *Contingencies* of Providence, or the *Knaveries* and *Cruelties* of Men; no more exposed, like *miserable* Vagrants, to beg our Happiness from Door to Door; to creep, and cringe, and fawn to the Humours of an *Inconstant* World; to court its Smiles, or tremble at its Frowns. For if Heaven be the Happiness we depend on, there is nothing can deprive us of it, but our own *free* Acts; and it is as much in our Power not to be *miserable*, as not to be *wicked*; and our *Happiness* being all embarked in the same Bottom with our *Piety* and *Vertue*, they must both of them run the same Fate, and either swim or sink together. If therefore we would be at *Peace* within our selves, we must put our selves under the Government of the Happiness of *Christians*; which is the only one that we can be sure of, there being no other within *our own* Power and Disposal: For till this is done, we are like Men in a Crowd, encompassed about with so many *cross rencounting* Accidents, as will never let us be at rest; but be perpetually shoving and jostling us *to and fro*; and still as we get *free* from one, another will be pressing upon us; and that which thrusts on *this*, will still be thrust on by another, without any Pause or Intermision; and so our *miserable* Minds will be always hurried about, and never want Causes of Disquiet. But when once we have fix'd upon that Happiness above, we shall be so much above these *little* Accidents *below*; and their Force will be so broken, before they can reach us, that we shall scarce be sensible of their *faint* Impressions; and so we shall pass on as quietly and undisturbedly through them, as we do now through those Crowds of *Motes* that are always dancing in the Air about us.

And so I have dispatch'd the first Thing I propos'd; which was, to shew, that our *blessed Lord*, in order to his giving us *his Peace*, hath remov'd from us all Causes of Disquiet.

2. I now proceed to the Second ; which is to shew, that he hath also taken Care to supply us with the most *effectual* Principles of *Peace*, and *Satisfaction* of Mind ; and they are these following :

1. That by the Sacrifice of *himself* he hath purged away our Guilts, and thereby given us the most *certain* Ground of Peace of Conscience.

2. That as he sacrificed *himself* for us, while he was upon *Earth* ; so now he is in *Heaven*, he hath the Ordering and Disposal of every Thing that concerns or befalls us.

3. That he hath procured for us a Futurity, sufficiently happy, to make us *infinite* amends for the *worst* Evils that can befall us here.

4. That he hath established this *happy* Futurity, upon such Terms and Conditions, as are within the reach of our *own* Power.

5. That he hath taken Care in his Absence to provide for us *such* Supports, as are *proportionable* to every Burthen he will lay upon us.

1. One Principle of *Peace* and *Satisfaction* of Mind wherewith our *Saviour* hath supplied us, is this, that by the Sacrifice of *himself*, he hath fully purged away our Guilts, and thereby given us the most *certain* Ground of Peace of Conscience : For he declared, that he died in our Persons and stead, and that all those *miserable* Things he endur'd upon the Cross, were in lieu of that Punishment that was due to God for our Sins ; that the Blood he spilt *there*, was design'd by him for the Price of our Redemption ; and that the Life he laid down *there*, was in Exchange for the *forfeited* Lives of our Souls. And to manifest God's Acceptance of it, as an *Equivalent* for our Punishment, he rose from the Dead, and was actually discharged from the Prison of the Grave ; by which he gave us an Acquittance under God's own Hand, purporting, that he had graciously accepted his Son's Death in lieu of our Punishment ; and that if now we would heartily repent and amend, all our *past* Guilts and Obligations to Punishment, should, in Consideration thereof, be for ever dissolved. Who then *can lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect*, seeing it is *Christ* that hath died, and thereby tendered a *full* Ransom for us to God ; *yea rather, that is risen again*, and thereby certified us, that the Father of Mercies hath graciously accepted and allowed of it ? So that if now we repent, we are as certain of our Pardon, as we are of the Death and Resurrection of our *Saviour* ; which are such Facts, of which we have as plain Demonstration as the Nature of Things will bear. And having so *certain* a Ground of Peace of Conscience before us, what can be more *conducive* to the Ease and Satisfaction of our Minds ? For a *quiet* Conscience is a Paradise within a Wilderness, whereinto a Man may retire when he can find nothing else to live upon, and to live chearfully and merrily in despite of all Misfortunes ; which like Showers of Hail falling upon the Tiles of a *Musick-House*, are not able with all their Clattering Noise, to disturb the *grateful* Harmony within. As therefore when all is *smooth* and *prosperous without*, a Man may shelter himself there from the Persecutions of his Conscience ; so when all is *calm* and *serene within*, he may shelter himself there from the Persecutions of the World : But when *both* are bestormed, he hath no Refuge to fly to. And therefore, that we may never be left utterly forsaken and abandoned, our *blessed Saviour*, by washing away our Guilt in *his own* Blood, hath opened to us a *safe* Retreat within our own Breasts, *viz.* that of a *quiet* and *serene* Conscience, whereinto we may easily retire, and house our selves, when we are persecuted with Storms and Tempest from without.

2. Another Principle of *Peace* and *Satisfaction* of Mind wherewith our *Saviour* hath furnished us, is this ; that as he sacrificed himself for us when he was upon *Earth* ; so now he is in *Heaven*, he hath the Ordering and Disposal of every Thing that concerns or befalls us. For now he is in *Heaven*, he intercedes for us in Virtue of that Sacrifice which he offered on *Earth* ; and in the Virtue of *this* his *meritorious* Intercession, all Power is given him in *Heaven* and *Earth*. And indeed, here-

herein consists the *Royalty* of his *Priesthood*, viz. that by interceding for us as a *Priest*, and continuing so to do, he first obtained, and still continues vested with a *Kingly Power* and Authority, to bestow upon us all those *Heavenly Blessings* he intercedes for. And hence all the Graces and Favours of *God* are in *Scripture* said to be derived to us, *in*, or *by*, or *through Jesus Christ*; implying, that as it is from *God the Father* originally, that all our Mercies flow; so it is through *God the Son* immediately, that they are handed and deriv'd to us; and that interceding for us as he doth, and always hath done, in Virtue of the powerful Oratory of his Sacrifice, he was first constituted, and is still continued the *Royal Distributer* of all his Father's Graces and Favours to Mankind. So that now we are assur'd, there is nothing can happen to us *good or bad*, but by his *merciful* Disposal: And can we think any thing *bad* that comes from his Hand, who hath evidenc'd himself so much our Friend as to die for us? He, who lov'd us to such a *stupendous* Degree, as to come down from *Heaven*, and assume our Natures, and therewith, all our *innocent* Infirmities and Miseries; and at last, to suffer for us the most *grievous* and *infamous* Death; can he be unkind to us, now he is our *King*, and hath the ordering and Disposal of all our Affairs? Whenever therefore any *calamitous* Accident befalls us, and we begin to grieve or repine at it; let us remember, that it is through his Permission or Appointment, who was so much our Friend while he was upon Earth, that he tendred our Welfare far beyond *his own* Life: And if this doth not set our Hearts at rest, and reconcile us to the *worst* of Things that can happen to us, we are beyond the Reach and Influence of Reason and Discourse. For how can we suspect any Thing to be *hurtful* to us, that is sent us down from our *merciful* Redeemer in *Heaven*; who when he was upon *Earth*, never thought any thing, no, not his own *Life and Blood*, too much, or too dear for us? How grievous soever therefore any *present* Accident may appear to us, the Hand it came from, speaks and declares it to be a Token of Love; since to be sure, nothing but Love can proceed from *that* Hand, whose Heart always loved us far above its own Ease, and Joy, and Life.

3. Another Principle of Peace and Satisfaction of Mind wherewith our *Saviour* hath supply'd us, is this, that he hath procur'd for us a *Futurity* sufficient to make us *infinite* Amends for the *worst* of *Evils* that can befall us here: For he hath not only purchased for us *Life and Immortality* at the Price of his Blood; but hath also clearly discover'd and brought it to light by his *Gospel*; the *joyous* Prospect of which is abundantly sufficient to support our Spirits under the most *direful* Accidents. For now when any *melancholy* Apprehensions begin to invade my Mind, this *blessed* Theme furnishes me with such a mighty Force of *joyous* Considerations, as are abundantly sufficient to dispel and scatter them, and cause them to fly away like the Morning Mists before the *rising* Sun. Hold out, O my *Faith* and *Patience*; it is but a very *little* while that I have to suffer: This *woful* Dream that now lies hovering over my Imagination, will vanish as soon as I awake in *Eternity*, and be as if it had never been at all. There all these *sad* Remembrances shall in one Moment be for ever lost, and swallowed up in one *continued everlasting* Joy; there I shall unload my self at once of all my *present* Sighs and Grievs; and in their room, take up *eternal* Songs of Praise and Hallelujahs; there I shall be plac'd far above all these Clouds and Storms, in a *calm* and *quiet* Region, where there is nothing but *Light* and *Harmony*, nothing but *Peace*, and *Joy*, and *Love*; from thence I shall ere long look down upon this *dark unquiet Atmosphere*, and remember with Joy all the *foul tempestuous* Weather I here endur'd, and have now surmounted; and the *glad* Remembrance of what is past, will then serve only as a Foil or Shadow to set off that *blessed* State of things, and render it more charming and illustrious. Why then art thou cast down, O my Soul, under the Sense of those *short-liv'd transitory* Evils, of which within this very few Moments thou shalt be sure to take leave for ever? Tho' this Night be dark, it is but short; and then will follow an *everlasting* Day. Tho' thy Voyage be *foul*, it is not long; 'tis only a *short* Day's Sail to a *blessed* Eternity; from whose *happy* Shores thou wilt a little while hence be looking back upon this *boisterous* Sea, and blessing those

those *angry* Storms and Waves that drove and hastned thee to that *happy* Port ; where every Moment's Injoyment will be sufficient to recompense thee a *thousand-fold* for all the Hardships under which thou art now suffering and complaining. Such Thoughts as these, that *blessed* Futurity our Saviour hath purchased for us, do naturally suggest to our Minds ; which mingling with the *utmost* Griets and Anxieties that any *Evil* from *without* can raise *within* us, are abundantly sufficient to compose and calm them, and to create a *happy* Serenity in *our own* Breast ; while all *without* us is *stormy* and *tempestuous*. For what *outward* Evil is there weighty enough to sink a Mind, that hath the Hope of an *everlasting* *Heaven* to support it ?

4. Another Principle of Peace and Satisfaction of Mind, wherewith our *Saviour* hath supply'd us, is this ; that he hath establish'd this *happy* Futurity upon such Terms and Conditions as are within the Reach of *our own* Power ; that is, upon *Faith in Christ*, and *Repentance from dead Works* ; which, tho' in this *degenerate* State of our Nature, it be not immediately in our Power to perform ; yet immediately it is, by those Helps and Assistances which *God* hath promised to us, and inseparably annexed to our making a *good* Use of *our own* natural Power : For since *God* by *his own* free Promise hath entail'd the Assistances of his *Grace* upon our *honest* Endeavour ; his *Grace* is as much at our Devotion, as *our own* Faculties ; and it is as much in our Power to perform what *we* cannot without his *Grace*, as it is to perform what *we* can : And therefore, seeing by his Assistance *we* can perform the Conditions of *eternal* Life, it is in our Power to perform them ; because it is no less within our Power to oblige him to assist us, than it is to oblige our selves to exert *our own* Power and Endeavours ; the Condition of our Happiness being through the *Grace* of *God* within *our own* Power, our Happiness is so too : Which, if duly consider'd, is a *mighty* Support under all Afflictions from *without*. For why should we grieve that it is in the Power of Men, and a thousand *adverse* Accidents, to rob us of our *Ease* and our *Wealth*, our *Liberty* and *Reputation* ? *God* be praised, our *main* Happiness consists not in these Things, but in *Heaven* ; there lies the Treasure of our Hearts, and the Hope of our Lives ; of which there is none but our selves can disappoint us. If we will be happy in the *eternal* Possession of that *inexhaustible* Mine of *Bliss*, *we* may ; and all the Hardships and Inconveniencies *we* may endure on the Way to it, are neither able to obstruct our Passage, nor hinder our *safe* Arrival ; unless by a *base* Surrender to them, *we* betray our selves. So that now *we* may give a *bold* Defiance to all the *combining* Malice of Men and Devils ; and tell them, that *we* will be *happy*, eternally *happy* in despite of the worst they can do to us, seeing the matter wholly depends upon *our own* Courage and Resolution, backt and assisted by the *never-failing* *Grace* of *God*. There is nothing that Men or Misfortune can deprive me of, but I can live without, and maintain my self in a *happy* and *glorious* Post for ever. Why then should I grieve, to see my Drums flung over-board, which within a few Moments hence, will be of no Use or Value to me, so long as it is in my Power to save all my *precious* and *immortal* Freight ; and thereby to secure my self of a most *happy* and *prosperous* Voyage : Whenever therefore, *we* are threatned with *sad* Contingencies, or with the Power or Malice of Men, *we* have this Answer ready to return to them ; *God* be praised, our *main* Happiness depends not upon you ; *we* can, if *we* will, go to *Heaven* in despite of you ; and when once *we* are *there*, *we* shall be far beyond your Reach ; and then these *light* Afflictions which you now lay upon *us*, and which are but for a *Moment*, will be found unworthy to be compar'd with that *eternal* *Glory* which shall be reveal'd to us. Which Consideration, closely applied, and deeply imprinted on our Minds, is of *sufficient* Virtue to ease and relieve us under the most *calamitous* Circumstances : For while our *main* Chance and Interest is safe, all is well with us ; and then *we* are secure, none can prejudice us, but our selves.

5. And Lastly, Another Principle of Peace and Satisfaction of Mind, wherewith our Saviour hath supply'd us, is this; that he hath taken care, during his Absence from us, to provide for us such Supports, as are proportionable to every Burthen he will lay upon us. For so he tells his *Disciples*, when he was departing from them, that it was *expedient* for them that he should go away; because until he went, according to the *Divine Oeconomy*, the *Comforter* was not to come: *But when I depart*, saith he, *I will send him unto you*, John 16. 7. And accordingly, when he departed, he sent down his *Holy Spirit* to represent himself, and act as his Vicegerent in his *Heavenly Kingdom*, and to do all that for us, which he himself would have done, had he continu'd Personally present with us. So that, tho' now he is a great way off from us in Person, yet by his *Spirit* he is still present with us; present, with all that tender Affection, and with all those yearning Bowels of Compassion that he express'd towards us while he was upon Earth. And whereas, had he continu'd among us in Person, he could have been present with us only at such determinate Places and Distances; he is now present with us wherever we are, in every Place, and at every Distance, by his immense Spirit; which, like an Omnipresent Soul, diffused through all his Mystical Body, gives Life and Motion to every Part and Particle of it. And having thus taken care to supply his Personal Absence from us with this *Divine Presence*, which is every way co-extended to the utmost Diffusion of his Church, we may depend upon it, that wherever, or in what Circumstances soever we are, he is by us, and with us, beholding all our Needs with a compassionate Heart, and ready to extend to us whatever Aids and Supports we stand in need of. How then can we droop in his blessed Presence? How can our Hearts sink while he stands by us? What Evil is there can scare or distract our Minds, whilst we consider, that the Almighty Spirit of the blessed Jesus, our Friend, is always and every where with us, ready bent to stretch forth his helping Hand to support us under every Oppression? Alas! I am afraid, this Burthen will at length grow too heavy for me; that my Strength and Courage will at last be forced to yield, and sink underneath it. Well, tho' you fear your own Strength; yet sure, you cannot doubt the Strength and Power of the Spirit of God; and his Strength is yours to all necessary Purposes, as much as it is his own: And therefore, unless you apprehend your Burthen to be too heavy for his Power, as well as yours, you have no reason to dread that you shall sink underneath the Weight of it. You are afraid lest you shou'd be called forth to suffer for Righteousness sake; and lest under the Rage and Violence of Persecution, your Faith and Constancy should shrink and yield. Why, consider with your selves, Are there not Thousands of Christians that have suffered before you, suffered as Terrible Things as you can possibly dread; and this not only with Patience and Constancy, but with Joy and Triumph? Why then should you suspect that Blessed Spirit which supported them, to be less able or willing to bear up you? He, who hath so often enabled so many tender Virgins, delicate Matrons, infirm and aged Bishops, to sing in the midst of Flames, to smile upon Racks, to triumph upon Wheels and Catastrophes; and in short, to endure such long and dolorous Martyrdoms, as many times they did, when their Tormenters took their Turns from Morning to Night, and ply'd them with all kinds of Cruelties, till many times they were forc'd to give over, and confess that they had not Heart enough to inflict the Tortures which those poor Sufferers had Courage enough to endure: He, I say, who hath thus far enabled them, can he not as well enable you? Is his Arm shortned, that he cannot save; or his Ear grown heavy, that he cannot hear you as well as them? Consider then, you have the same Right that they had, by the same never-failing Promise, to this his enabling Power, which by so many Glorious Instances hath demonstrated it self sufficient to support you under the heaviest Oppressions: And therefore you have all the reason in the World to expect the same Aids and Supports from it, if ever you shou'd be reduced to the same Extremities. Our great Care therefore, ought to be, that we do not desert our Saviour, either by wilful Apostacy from his Faith, or Disobedience to his Laws: For so long as we continue faithful to him, he cannot leave and desert us; our main Concern ought to be, that we do our Part, and not that he doth his: For

For he cannot fail, tho' we may. If we prove *true* to him, we may assuredly depend upon it, that he will prove *true* to us, and not leave us destitute of any Help or Support that in any Condition is necessary for us. If therefore to serve the *wise* and *holy* Ends of his Providence, he shou'd at any time think it meet to call us to suffer, we may set our Hearts at rest upon this Assurance, that so long as we take care to maintain our Integrity, he must take care to maintain our Strength, and not permit us to sink under the Burthen he lays upon us, for want of any Degree of *Comfort* and *Support*, that our State and Condition requires. Which Consideration duly apply'd, cannot fail of giving a great deal of Ease to our anxious and desponding Mind.

Having thus shewn at large, what abundant Provision our Saviour hath made for the Peace and Satisfaction of our Minds, I shall conclude *all* in a very few Words. Our Blessed Saviour hath long since told us, that in *this* World we shall have *Trouble*; but that in him we shall have *Peace*: Which tho' it were more *eminently* true in those *early Days of Suffering* and *Persecution*, doth yet hold most certainly true, not only in *Times of Peace*, but even in the most prosperous Circumstances of Human Life. For we cannot but know, that we are dependent upon Chance; we cannot but know, that it is in the Power of Ten thousand Contingencies to disturb us; and this in despite of us, will create a great many *anxious Thoughts*, and vex us with *melancholy Apprehensions* of our Futurity. And tho' at present we may hush them with Jolity and Mirth; upon the next Reflection, they will be sure to awake again, and to revenge themselves upon us for those Moments of Ease we ravished from them; and then, when any evil Accident threatens or approaches us, we can give our selves no certain Assurance of escaping it. For when we have done *all* that lies within the Compass of our *Wisdom* and *Power*, there may a Thousand Crosses arise in our way, which it is impossible for us, either to foresee or prevent; and turn our most promising Designs upon our selves, and hasten the *Evils* upon us by those very Means which we chuse to prevent it: The Sence of which must necessarily cause many a stinging Thought to swarm about our Minds, and to vex and disturb us in our deepest Security.

Thus in our best Estate we are poor and indigent Creatures, fain to seek abroad, and to go a begging for our Happiness from Door to Door; to depend upon Chance, and live insecure of every thing we either possess, or desire, or hope for. And considering how prone we are to be alarm'd with the Prospect of a sad Futurity, and to magnifie distant Evils in our own Apprehensions, and to aggravate present ones by our Impatience and Despair; and in a Word, to pall our best Enjoyments, by expecting more from them than their Nature will afford: Considering these things, I say, it is the *greatest Nonsense* in the World, for Men to expect *Peace* and *Satisfaction of Mind* from any thing here below. And if we are thus liable to Disturbance in our *best* Estate, alas, what are we in our *worst*! When Calamities come rolling upon us, like the Waves of the Sea, upon the Back of one another, and we have no Harbour in View to put in at. In this vast Tumult of Things therefore, whether shall we betake our selves for Tranquillity and Peace? If we go into the World, every thing in it tells us, it is not in me: If we go out of the World, into Desarts and Solitudes, the Stings we shall either find there, or carry thither with us, will soon convince us that it is not in them. Where then can we hope to find *Peace*, but only in *Jesus, the Prince of Peace*? To him therefore let us go with an humble Faith and obedient Will, with a resolved Mind to adhere to his Truth, and submit to his Laws, and *wholly* to resign our selves to his Conduct and Government. And if in him you do not find *all* that *Peace* and *Satisfaction* you have hitherto sought in vain, never give Credit to any thing that is Sacred more. I am sure, it is to be found in him, if we wisely, and honestly, and industriously seek it: Thousands have found it in him, who could find it no where else; and having found it, have enjoy'd themselves all their Days after in *sweet Content* and *Peace*; and at length have breathed out their Souls to him in Praises for the Happy Discovery.

And therefore if it be not our own Fault, we may soon add our selves to this blessed Number, by devoting our selves to him as they did, and surrendring our Lives and Interests to his Government and Disposal. And when once we have performed *this* with a sincere and resolute Intention, we shall by degrees perceive these *Tempests* within us quieted and abated, and our *stormy Minds* clearing up into an happy Serenity; and still, as we more and more subdue our *Wills* and *Affections* to him, we shall feel and experience our selves more and more at Ease; until at length we shall arrive to such a *settled* Peace and Tranquillity of Soul, as that it will be beyond the Power of any *outward* Concern to disturb us. And now our Mind will be a Paradise to it self: a Paradise wherein it will be able to live contented and happy, and to breathe calm and gentle *Thoughts*, how *tempestuous* soever its Condition is *without*. And finding all composed and quiet *within*, we shall lead a Life far more easie, and even, and consistent than ever: For now we shall no longer reserve our selves to follow Fortune and the Turns of *outward Affairs*, to comply with all the *Mutabilities* of the Wind, and still to *transform* our selves into new *Shapes*, as we are running through the still-changing *Fashions* of the World. Now we shall no longer perplex and intangle our selves by *Knavish Tricks* and *sordid Compliances*, by being forced still to study how to act a new Part, and to put on a new Garb of Humour and Conversation, upon every new Alteration of Affairs; but our Way will lie *even, easie* and *direct* before us; and whatsoever happens to us from *without*, whether it *rains* or *shines*, proves *calm* or *tempestuous*, the inward Peace and Satisfaction we shall find in following *Jesus*, by our firm adhering to his Truth, and Obedience to his Laws, will carry us safely through all Events, and render us far more happy, even in our persecuted Sincerity, than we can reasonably suppose to be in the most *prosperous* Hypocrisie. Wherefore if ever you intend to be at rest within, and to enjoy your selves in Peace and Tranquillity, go to *Jesus*, the Prince and Author of Peace; take with you Words, and say, O blessed *Jesus*, hitherto, we confess, other Lords have had Dominion over us; such as *Pride* and *Ambition*, *Lust* and *Avarice*; and these have proved unmerciful Tyrants to us; they have continually harressed and oppressed our Minds: They have laid waste all our Peace, stripp'd and plunder'd us of our Self-enjoyment, and almost worn out our Lives in perpetual Troubles and Anxieties. Wherefore, now at last we return unto thee weary and heavy laden, not only with Guilts, but Vexations, resolving for the future that thee alone we will serve. O, do not reject us, thy oppressed and miserable Creatures, who are driven unto thee for Refuge, from those cruel Task-masters that have hitherto reigned over us; but permit us to spend the Remainder of our Days under thy happy Government. We know, thy *Toke* is easie, and thy Burthen light; and therefore suffer us now at last, we beseech thee, to come unto thee, that in thee we may find Rest for our Souls, who have sought it in vain in every thing but Thee. And having thus surrender'd up our selves to him, let us by our constant Perseverance in Well-doing, endeavour to subdue our selves more and more to his Will, in this full Assurance, that from our hearty and punctual Conformity thereunto, we shall reap, not only Peace and Tranquillity here, but also immortal Glory and Happiness hereafter. Which, we beseech thee to grant us all, of thy infinite Mercy, O blessed *Jesus*: To whom, with thy Great Father, and Eternal Spirit, be ascribed of us and all the World, all Honour, and Glory, and Praise, from this time forth and for evermore. Amen.

DIS-

DISCOURSE XI.

UPON

JAMES i. 8.

A double-minded Man is unstable in all his Ways.

BY a *double-minded Man* here, we are to understand (as is plain from the Context) an *insincere Man*; one who pretends to Religion, and hath a good Inclination towards it; but is not arrived to a firm and prevailing Resolution of adhering to it, maugre all Temptations to the contrary; that bears some faint and ineffectual Regard to the Rules of his Duty, and the Dictates of his Conscience; but not such as hath the Superiority over him, and doth command and govern his Life and Conversation; not such as hath that prevailing Influence upon him, as to hinder him from being ordinarily counterway'd by his *Appetites or Passions, or secular Interests*, to the Commission of Unlawful and Irregular *Actions*. So that the *single-minded Man* is one, who hath no other prevailing Purpose and Resolution, but to adhere to God in the Profession and Practice of True Religion; and upon every Emergency is ready fixed to perform what God demands of him, by the Voice of Revelation and Right Reason; and in a Word, that lives under no other commanding Principle but this, *I will always do what God will have me*: And so on the contrary, the *double-minded Man* is one, that fluctuates between *Two Minds and Wills*; a *Will* for God, and a *Will* for the World; and is governed *sometimes* by one, and *sometimes* by another; but is never true or constant to either. In short, he is one, who being yet unsubdu'd to the commanding Power and Influence of Religion, hath no fix'd, no determin'd Mind or Resolution; but is not only of several Minds upon several Occasions, but also of contrary Minds upon contrary Occasions. For his Heart is so divided between his God and his Interest, his Duty and his Lust, that, like a *Needle* between two *Loadstones*, he is always wavering to and again, and pointing alternately to both, but is never fixed to either. And of *this Man* the Apostle tells us, *That he is unstable in all his Ways*. Where by *Ways*, according to the *Hebrew Phraseology*, he means *Actions*; he is unstable in all his *Actions*; that is, he *always acts* with an *anxious, doubtful and misgiving Mind*; he knows not where to find himself, nor many times which Way to turn himself; he leads a very *uncertain, insecure and unquiet Life*; being all along perplexed and intangled in the whole Course of his *Actions*. The Words thus explained, may be resolved into this Proposition:

That whilst Mens *Minds* are divided between *God* and their *Lusts*, and are not intirely subdu'd to *his Will*; they must necessarily lead very *anxious, insecure, unstable Lives*; That till such time as we act from an intire Submission of our *Souls* to *God*, we can never act steadily and securely; but must be *always fluctuating in great Anxiety and Uncertainty*.

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The *Wise Man* tell us, that, *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely*, Prov. 10. 9. He goes on in a *direct, secure, and even* Course of Action, wherein there is no Perplexity, or Intanglement : Whereas the Life of a *double-minded Hypocrite*, whose Heart is divided between *God* and the World, is a *perpetual Maze and Labyrinth* ; wherein the farther he goes ; the more he is lost and confounded. And this will evidently appear upon the following Considerations :

1. That he acts upon no *fixed or certain* Principles.
2. That the Way and Course of his Actions, is all *obscure and intricate*.
3. That he is always fain to live in a *Disguise*, and is therein insecure of Concealment.
4. That he is always at odds with himself, and in *perpetual* Variance with his own Reason.
5. That he is at a *miserable* Uncertainty, as to the *present* Events and Issues of his own Actions.
6. That he hath a most *disfmal* Prospect before him of the *final* Issue, and Event of all.

1. The *double-minded* Man acts upon no *fixed or certain* Principles. For the Principles he proceeds upon, are such as have no Foundation in the Nature of Things ; but, like Castles in the Air, are built upon *mere* Dreams and Delusions ; which, whenever his Reason awakes, will sink and disappear. For either he lives upon no Principles at all, but acts like the Beasts that perish, upon *blind* Instincts, and the *unaccountable* Impulses of his *brutal* Sense ; or upon such Principles as these, that there is no such *Being* in the World as an *eternal, and invisible, Almighty Power* ; or that if there be, he lives retir'd from us, and takes no Notice of what we do ; or that if he doth, 'tis as an *unconcern'd* Spectator, to whom it is purely indifferent, whether we do *Good or Evil* ; or that if he be at all pleas'd with our *good* Deeds, and displeas'd with our *bad* ; yet it is not to any such Degree, as to intail any *future* Rewards upon the *one*, or Punishments on the *other* ; or that if there be any such Rewards and Punishments prepar'd by him, they are so *slight and inconsiderable*, that the Loss of the *one*, and Sufferance of the *other*, are abundantly compensated by the *present* Pleasure of a sinful Life ; or in fine, that if neither the *one* nor the *other* prove true, yet we may securely enjoy these Pleasures while we are able ; and by repenting at last, when we are old or dying, and are able to enjoy 'em no longer, may intitle our selves to those Rewards, whatsoever they are, and secure our selves from those Punishments. This is the Chain of Principles, upon which *bad* Men live and act, if they act upon any at all ; and which are all of them ground'd upon such *doubtful* Presumptions ; such *thin* Pretences, and *unsatisfactory* Reasonings, as no Man in his Wits can ever be thoroughly secure of. For besides that, they contradict the *best and wisest* part of the World, the current Sense of *Human* Nature, and the *common* Consent of all Mankind, which are such Prejudices against them, as must necessarily render them very doubtful at least : Besides all this, I say, they have so *strong* a Current of Evidence against them, and are over power'd with such a Force of Arguments from all the Quarters of *Reason and Religion* ; and the contrary Principles are so much more agreeable to all the Appearances of Things, to the *sacred Oracles*, to *Human* Society, and to the very Frame of *Human* Nature ; and in a Word, have every way so *vast* an Over weight of Reason on their side ; that it is impossible for any Man in a *cold* Mind, to be confident, that they are true, how much soever it may be his Interest to wish them so. So that whereas the *sincere and upright* Man, living as he doth, upon *well tried* Principles, that for their Truth, have been always found most agreeable to Reason ; and for their Usefulness, always approv'd by *constant* Experience ; treads firmly and boldly, being secure of the Ground he goes upon : The *double-minded* Hypocrite, being all along uncertain of the Grounds of

of his Action, walks like a *benighted* Traveller in a *dangerous* Road, where he is fain to feel out his Way, and to tread tenderly, and cautiously, lest his next Step should be into a Bogg or a Precipice. And so long as he is *insecure* of the Principles upon which he acts, he can never be secure that he acts safely. He knows, that if the Principles he goes upon, prove *false*, he is undone; and whether they will prove so, or no, he is at best uncertain; and so through the whole Course of his Sin and Life, he walks with an *anxious* and *misgiving* Mind, and goes trembling on between Hope and Fear, to the *final* Issue and Event, which, for all he knows, may prove such as will put an End to all his Hopes for ever. For, *maugre* all his Confidence, he cannot be sure, but that when he dies, he may find all the Principles he acts on, baffled by a *woful* Experience; he may then feel that there is a *God*, to whom Vengeance belongs, and an *eternal* Life of Rewards and Punishments; and if he should, how would it blank and amaze him, to find himself, instead of being reduc'd to an *insensible* Substance, landed on a *strange inhospitable* Shore, inhabited with *ghastly* Furies, and *miserable* Ghosts, and shut up with them by a *vast* *surrounding* Gulph, in *everlasting* Horror and Despair? And therefore, seeing he can have no Security, but that such may be the *fatal* Close of his sinful Life, he must whenever he *cooly* reflects, be miserably *anxious* and *uneasie*, and expect the mighty Event with Dread and *dire* Abodings.

2. The Way and Course of a *double-minded* Man's Actions, is all *obscure* and *intricate*. For whereas the Course of an *honest, upright* Man, is for the main of it, chalk'd out to his Hands, both by *divine* Revelation, and the *natural* and *eternal* Reasons of Things; and that so plainly, and clearly, that as soon as he opens his Eyes, he may easily discern it, without any great Reach of Wit, or Depth of Judgment; the Rule of his Actions being *open* and *direct*, without any *dark* Subtilties, or *intricate* Windings and Turnings: The *false* *pretending* Hypocrite lives in a Maze, wherein having no certain Rule to go by, he is very often at a loss which way to direct himself. For having forsaken the plain Paths which *God* hath describ'd to him, he is put upon inventing a Way for himself, of studying *his own* Steps, and groping to his End through a *Labyrinth* of *popular* Errors and Mistakes; in which he is oftentimes so lost and bewilder'd, that he knows neither where he is, nor whither to go next; and sometimes the Way that he takes, lies quite *cross* to his Ends, and sometimes leads him about in such a *wide* Compass, that by that time he arrives at them, they are not worth his Travel; and even when he thinks himself *most* in the right, and goes on with the fullest Assurance, Time and Chance many times cast up so many Difficulties and *perplexing* Incurrances in his Way, as to puzzle all his Wit and Contrivance, how to break through them. Thus, when Men leave *God's* Way, which is a *plain*, a *sure*, and *infallible* one, and commit themselves to the Conduct of their own *blind* Wills, and *short-sighted* Reason; they forsake the Light of the Sun, to follow a *Night-fire*, which instead of conducting them in the *plain* and *direct* Way, carries them at random about in the Dark, leads them *hither* and *thither*, *backwards* and *forwards*, over Hedges and Ditches, through Breaks and Bogs, till they are lost and maz'd in *their own* Wandrings. While they walk in *God's* Way, they have *God's* *Wisdom* for their Guide, which cannot mis-lead them: There they have nothing to do, but to follow the *easy* Directions of an *infallible* Mind, to receive his Commands, and to obey them; there they are free from all the Trouble of forming *new* Resolutions, and inventing *new* Measures of Action upon new Emergencies; there they see their Way plainly describ'd to them; and are resolv'd once for all, to pursue it through all Events, without any further Pause or Deberation; being fully satisfied in themselves, that it is much *safer* for them to follow *God's* Will, which acts from *infinite* Goodness, by *infinite* Wisdom, with *infinite* Power, than to follow *their own*, which they know by *woful* Experience, is so liable to be imposed upon by false Shews and Appearances; and to mistake *Poyson* for *Physick*, and *Evil* for *Good*. Thus while they are in *God's* Way, they find all things *direct*, and *plain*, and *easy* to them; but when they divert into *their own*, there they have nothing to guide them, but a *vain* *foolish* Mind, that is easily trick'd and im-

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Poised upon, and a blind *Appetite* that is conducted by a *roving* Imagination; there they are fain to live by their *Wits*, upon *extemporary Shifts* and *Evasions*; and still to invent *new Ways* upon *new Occasions*, and to wander about in a *mysterious* Labyrinth of *little Tricks* and *Contrivances*; which instead of extricating them out of the *Difficulties* of Life, do commonly but more and more perplex and intangle them. And hence, as *the Path of the Just* is in Scripture describ'd to be *as the shining Light*, Prov. 4. 18. to have *nothing froward or perverse in them*, and to be *plain to him that understandeth*, Prov. 8. 8, 9. and to be an *even Place*, where *none of his Steps shall slide*, Psal. 26. 12. compar'd with 37. 31. So on the other side, *the Paths of the Wicked*, are said to be *dark and crooked*, Prov. 2. 13, 15. and to be *uneven and slippery*, Jer. 23. 12. And in such a Way as *this*, how is it possible for a Man to walk firmly and stably.

3. The *double-minded* Man is always fain to live in a Disguise; and is therein very *insecure*, of Concealment: And this also renders him *unstable in all his Ways*: Tho' considering what a *false* and *ill-natur'd* World we live in, it is many times an *honest* and *necessary* Prudence, for a Man to reserve his Mind, and not proclaim even his *fairest Intentions* in every one's Ear with whom he converses. But for a Man to live in *continual* Disguise, and always look *one* Way, and row *another*; to counterfeit, and dissemble, and mask his real *Intentions* with contrary *Appearances*; is a very *uneasie* way of living: For there is *twice* the *Difficulty* in every Thing that he *aims* and *drives* at, as there is in an *honest* and *above board* Procedure. Here *honest* Ends are pursued by *direct* Means, without need of any Colour or Artifice; whereas, *there* commonly more Art is requir'd to justify the *Means*, than to manage them; and to dissemble the *Ends*, than to obtain them. For whilst the *Ends* a Man proposes, be *foul* and *dishonest*, he must in his own Defence, pretend quite contrary to *his own* Intentions; and to form and manage his *Pretensions* so artificially, as to conceal his *bad Intentions* under them, till they are executed, is commonly the *greatest* Difficulty in the Execution of them. For tho' Men may be *foolish* enough; yet they are not *good-natur'd* enough, to be *always* imposed upon by *fair* Pretences; their very ill Nature makes them *jealous* and *suspicious*; and their Jealousie and Suspicion makes them prying and inquisitive. And what a deal of Art must it require, for a Man to conceal himself, and carry on his *ill* Aims with any *plausible* Colour, when he hath so many *jealous* and *inquisitive* Eyes upon him? And then for a Man to dissemble, is an Outrage to himself; 'tis to act against the Grain of *his own* Nature, by making an *outward* Shew and Appearance of that which he *inwardly* hates. For while a Man *pretends* to be *that* which he *is not*, he must seem in his Actions to be *that which* he is most averse to; and all the while he doth so, he thwarts himself, and acts directly contrary to his own *Inclinations*. If his *wicked* Aims did not force him to hide himself, while he is making a *formal* Shew of Mortification, he would much rather be satiating his *hungry Lusts*; while he is hanging down his Head, like a Bul-rush, to disguise his *Pride* and *Ambition*, he would much rather be *strutting*, *insulting*, and *domineering*; while he is giving his *Alms*, to be *seen of Men*, he would much rather be *grinding* and *oppressing* the Poor; and whilst in order to his devouring *Widows Houses*, he is making *long Prayers*, he would much rather be glutting his Avarice with the Spoil. So that all the while he pretends to be the *contrary* to what he is, he must practise the *contrary* to what he is inclin'd; and while he doth so, he offers a perpetual Force and Violence to himself. Now what *uneasie* Way of living must this be, for a Man to be always studying how to conceal himself, and to be forc'd to live in a Disguise that he *hates*? And yet this is the Life of the *double minded* Man, that trains between God and the World: And then, that which adds to his Uneasiness, is, that after all, he can never be secure of his Disguise: He knows, that if he should be discover'd through it, it would quite spoil his Game; and instead of setting a Gloss upon his *foul* Intentions, it would only render them more *ugly* and *odious*; there being nothing can render Wickedness more ugly than it is, but the Discovery and Appearance of it through the Vail of Sanctity. So that if ever his *wicked* Intentions should happen to be discovered, they will be

be sure to fare the worse for their being disguised ; and 'tis a Thousand to One, but *first* or *last*, some Accident or *other* detects and unmasks them ; and then they are forever baffled and disappointed. So that this *double minded* Hypocrite walks like a Malefactor in a Vizard, afraid of every one that looks wisely upon him, jealous of being betray'd, even by his *own* Voice, or Shape or Deportment, full of *anxious* Thoughts, lest by some Accident or *other*, his Vizard should drop off and discover him ; being conscious to himself, that if ever the *Mystery* of his Iniquity should be unfolded, and what he hath acted *behind* the Curtain, should be brought to Light, he shall not only lose all the Credit and Advantage of the *Part* he hath hitherto so *artificially* acted ; but also be hiss'd off the Stage with Scorn and Infamy. And how then is it possible for a Man to walk steadily under such *slippery* Circumstances, when he dances upon a Rope, as it were, where, if he trips, he falls ; and if he falls, he is ruined.

4. He is always at odds with himself ; and in *perpetual* Variance with his *own* Reason. There is a Sense in Mens Souls, that doth as naturally distinguish between *Good* and *Evil*, as their Taste doth between *bitter* and *sweet* ; and is equally pleased or offended by them. Whilst therefore, *this* Sense remains alive within us, and in any Degree *quick* and *perceptive*, every Touch and Impression of *Evil* will *more* or *less* pain and aggrieve it ; and till with the *customary* Impressions of the *Evil*, a Man hath fear'd and stupify'd his Sense of it, he will never be able to sin in quiet for it ; but upon every *cold* Reflection on his *own* ill Courses, will feel a *sensible* Remorse and Compunction. And this is inevitable to the *double-minded* Man, who divides himself between *God* and his *Lusts* : For he retains so much of *God*, as will always keep his Sense of *Good* and *Evil* alive ; and together with it, he retains so much of his *Lusts*, as will always disturb and offend it : So that at once he takes *effectual* Care both to preserve his Sense of *Evil* quick and vigorous, and to be perpetually vexing it with the *painful* Impressions of *Evil* ; and so treats himself, as heretofore the Tormentors did the *suffering* Martyrs ; who gave them Cordials to keep them alive, only to enable them to sustain more Torments. If he would wholly abandon *God*, he might thereby extinguish his Sense of *Evil* ; or if he would wholly abandon his *Lusts*, he might thereby prevent his Sensation of *Evil* ; but while he retains *both*, he retains both Sense for his Torment, and Torment for his Sense ; and at once cherishes the *Evil* that afflicts his Sense, and preserves it alive to endure the Affliction. There are no Two Things in the World can less endure one *another* in the *same* Breast, than a *sensible* Conscience, and a *wicked* Will ; which, like *Fire* and *Water*, will be continually struggling till either the *one* is quenched, or the *other* evaporated. The Will will not let the Conscience be quiet, nor the Conscience the Will ; and so those *Two* Commanding Powers of our Souls will live in *perpetual* Variance ; and admit of no *other* Intercourse, but *mutual* Violences and Outrages, till either the *one* is extinguished, or the *other* subdued. Whilst therefore a Man's Mind is *double* and *divided*, his Soul is in a State of War ; and there being *Two* irreconcilable Parties perpetually struggling within his Breast ; a Law in his *Mind* fighting against the Law in his *Members*, his *Reason* against his *Appetite*, his Conscience against his Will ; so that he can take neither Part, without doing Violence to himself. If he sides with his Conscience, he *outrages* his Will ; if he sides with his Will, he *forces* his Conscience ; if he take part with his Appetite, he makes War against his Reason ; if he complies with his Reason, he bids defiance to his Appetite. Thus which way soever he determines himself, he is sure to determine against one Part of himself : And it can never be otherwise, till one of these *adverse* Parts of himself are subdued, and his *double* Mind is reduced to a *single* one. When he hath but *one* Mind, whether it be a *good* or a *bad* one, he will be at Peace and Unity with himself ; but before he can have one *good* Mind, he must form a *good* Resolution, and follow it, till he hath intirely subdued his Will and Appetite to his Reason and Conscience ; and then the *intestine* War will conclude in a *happy* Peace : And so on the contrary, before he can have one *bad* Mind, he must abandon himself to all *Ungodliness* and *worldly* Lusts, and continually drink in Iniquity, as the Horse drinks in Water, till he hath intoxicated his Reason with it, and stupified his Conscience ; and then

the *intestine* Struggle will conclude in a *lethargick* Quiet and Insensibility : But to arrive at *this*, is far more difficult, than it is to acquire the *former* : For while a Man contends with his Reason and Conscience, he contends with his *original* Nature ; and to vanquish *that*, is far more difficult, than to subdue his *wicked* Will, and *inordinate* Appetite, which are but his *acquired* Nature ; and consequently, doth not so inseparably adhere to him, nor is so inveterate. But till his Conscience and his Reason are intirely vanquished, they will be struggling and contending ; and whilst they do so, he will be continually at Odds and Variance with himself. He must Act all along with a *Self-condemning* Mind, and be content to endure the Reproaches of his Reason, and the Clamours of his Conscience ; and while he doth so, he can never Act steadily and securely. For whilst his Reason, which is to be his Guide, is dissatisfied with *his* Way, it is impossible for him to walk on without *Diffidence* and *Anxiety* ; at every Step he must tread with Distrust, and proceed with a *trembling* Heart, lest the Ground should sink under him ; and while he thus walks with a *misgiving* Conscience, and an *ill aboding* Mind, it is impossible but he must be *unstable* in all his Ways.

4. He is at a *miserable* Uncertainty, as to the *present* Event and Issue of his Actions. He knows, or at least, he shrewdly suspects, that there is a *wise* and *all-seeing*, a *just* and *Almighty* Providence that over-rules all *Causes*, and disposes of all *Events* ; and without which, there is nothing can succeed, how wisely soever it is designed and projected. He knows, that in this *Superintending* Power of Providence, there is an *essential* Goodness and Rectitude of Nature, which invariably inclines it to *love* and *bless* Goodness and Righteousness, and to *hate* and *curse* their Contraries, in whomsoever it finds them : And being thus persuaded, he cannot but conclude himself insecure, whilst he either aims at *unjust* Ends, or uses *unjust* Means to obtain them ; both the *one* and the *other* being infinitely odious to *that over-ruling* Power upon which his Success depends. For he must either imagine, that the most *probable* Way to oblige *this* Power to succeed him, is to brave and *beckon* it into a *fawning* Compliance with his Wishes, than which there is nothing more absurd and unreasonable ; or be at least infinitely *jealous* and *suspicious*, that the *wicked* Courses he takes, will, instead of obliging it to prosper them, arm its Vengeance against them, and provoke it to determine them in some *dire* Event. For if *God* hath the Disposal of all *Events* whether *good* or *evil*, it is certainly every whit as reasonable a Project, for a Man to drink *deadly* Poyson to obtain his Health, or to commit *high* Treason to escape hanging, as to endeavour to obtain any *Good* ; or to escape any *Evil*, by such Courses as *God* hates and abhors. For if the Way to obtain *his* Favour, is to please him ; and the Way to please him, is to do what is pleasing to him, as most certainly it is ; then it is as evident as any Proposition in the *Mathematicks*, that he who endeavours by such Courses as he knows are displeasing to him, to obtain any *Good*, or avoid any *Evil* with *God's* Disposal, uses the most *contrary* Means to effect his Ends, and only spends his Pains to *thwart* and *countermine* himself. The *double-minded* Man therefore being conscious of himself, that he hath rendred *God* his Enemy can never be reasonably secure in *his own* Mind of obtaining any *Good*, or escaping any *Evil* that is in *God's* Disposal. For tho' to serve the *wise* Ends of his Providence, *God* many times gratifies bad Men, and gives them their *own* Hearts Desire ; yet for them to expect any *Good* at his hands, whilst the whole Course of their Actions is a *continued* Provocation of him, is the most *unreasonable* Presumption in the World : 'Tis to suppose him, not only *insensible* of *Affronts* and *Injuries* ; but also *fond* of them, *pleased* and *delighted* with them to *that* Degree, as to own himself obliged to crown and reward them with his Favours ; For unless it be this, there is nothing they can flatter in the Nature of *God*, that can incline him to be kind to them. While therefore they are in Pursuit of any *Good*, or in Flight from any *Evil*, if any *wise* Thought should arise in their Mind concerning the *Event*, it must be very *anxious* and *desponding*. There is such a *Good* in my View, which I would fain enjoy, and am resolved to use my *utmost* Endeavour to compass ; but alas, it is in the Disposal of *God*, who is the *Sovereign* Arbitrator of my Fate ; and unless he

he will be so kind as to award it to me, my *utmost* Skill and Conduct in the Prosecution of it, will prove insignificant : But how can I hope, that he will succeed my Design, who hath so many Reasons to be my *mortal* Enemy ; and if he will not, he hath ten Thousand Accidents under his Command, by any *one* of which he can baffle and defeat me ; and if he should gratifie my Desire, I have no reason to believe, that it is out of Kindness ; and if it be not, instead of a *Blessing*, it will prove a *Curse* to me. There is such an *Evil* hangs over me, that I would fain escape, and am resolved to imploy my *utmost* Care and Industry to prevent it : But when I have done all, it is in the Hand of *God*, whose Vengeance I have armed against me by a Thousand Provocations ; and if he will bring it upon me (which I have too much Cause to fear) he can do it by those very *Means* whereby I am endeavouring to prevent it. And if he should succeed my Endeavours, I have *just* Ground to suspect, that it would be in Displeasure to me ; and then it will prove but the Removal of a *less* Evil, to make way for a *greater*. Thus, if he truly reason with himself concerning the *Events* of *his own* Actions, it must create in him *infinite* Despondence and Anxiety. And whilst a Man thus lives in Fear of the *Event*, it will be impossible for him to act with any Steadiness or Security. This therefore is the Case of the *double-minded* Man ; who being conscious to himself, that all *Events* are in *God's* Disposal, whom he hath so many Ways provoked to be his Enemy, must necessarily act with a *dubious* and *trembling* Mind ; being so uncertain within himself, whether *that* which he is doing will issue in his Benefit, or Bane.

6. And Lastly, He hath a most *dismal* Prospect before him of the *final* Issue and Event of all. Whenever he casts his Eyes beyond this *present* scene of Things, wherein his Mind is tossed to and fro in such *infinite* Uncertainties ; there he sees nothing but *dismal* Horror and Tragedy. nothing but *Darkness*, *Wretchedness* and *Despair* ; nothing but *Famine* to his Appetites, *Anguish* to his Mind, and *Torment* to his Conscience ; nothing to accompany him, but *Devils* and *damned Ghosts* ; nothing to entertain him, but *horrible* Thoughts and *dire* Reflections : Which *woful* Prospect, if he hath not out-sinned all Sense, must necessarily alarm all his Fears, and strike his very *Soul* into an Agony. And when a Man thus feels his *present* State bad, and foresees that the *future* will be ten Thousand Times worse, he must be a *perfect* Sot, or a *miserable* Wretch. Whilst he is walking through this *short* Inclosure of Time here, at every Step he feels himself prick'd, and torn by *his own* Cares, and Fears, and Anxieties, which, like Bryars and Thorns, grow up round about him ; and when he looks over the Pale, into a *vast* Field of *Eternity*, there he sees nothing but *dire* and *horrid* Spectacles, nothing but burning Wrath and Vengeance attending to persecute him to *eternal* Ages. So that whether he looks *backwards* or *forwards*, or but just before him, his Eyes can find nothing but *uncomfortable* Objects. That which is *past*, is all *tasteless* and *insipid* ; that which is *present*, is mostly *nauseous* and *unpalatable* ; but that which is *to come*, is all *dire* and *intolerable* ; and this is the Sting of his Misery. Were his *past* or *present* Circumstances far worse than they are, they were *easy* to be born in the Prospect of a more *comfortable* Futurity ; but when *this* is worse, ten thousand times worse, than the worst of what is either *past* or *present* ; for a Man to pass through all these *sad* Things together with any Patience or Content, requires the Hardness and Insensibility of a Stone. It is sad enough, God knows, to walk through the Cares, and Fears, and Disquietudes which naturally attend a *false* and *double* Mind ; but to walk through all *these* within full View of Hell, and at every Step to perceive ones self approaching *nearer* and *nearer* to it, is to pass through a most *dismal* Expectation, to a more *dismal* Experience ; which is doubtless, the most *woful* Condition that *Human* Life can be exposed to. And yet this is the Condition of the *double-minded* Man ; who acts his Sin with an Expectation of suffering eternally for it, and robs within Sight of the Place of Execution. And when with that *Persian* Judge, he is thus condemned to sit out all his Days with the Sword of *eternal* Vengeance hanging over him by a *frail* Thread of Life, which is every Moment in danger of breaking ; how is it possible he should en-

joy himself in any tolerable Degree of *Peace* and *Security* of Mind. Doubtless, if he hath any Sense of Danger, the Foresight of so great a one as *this*, of being *miserable* for ever, must necessarily create in him a proportionable Fear and Anxiety, and consequently, render him very *unstable in all his Ways*.

What then remains, but that seeing the State of *Hypocrites* and *double-minded Men*, is so *wretched*, and *miserable*, and *insecure*, we all of us from henceforth resolve, as we tender *our own* Ease and Quiet, to lay aside all *Hypocrisy* and *Double-dealing*, and act through the remaining Part of our Minds with *Plainness*, *Integrity*, and *Simplicity* of Mind. Of which way of living, if you would once be persuaded to make a *thorough* Experiment, I dare engage, you would find it abundantly more *secure*, and *easy*, and *comfortable*, than that which you have hitherto pursued. And to convince you of the Truth of this, I will crave leave in a few Words, to represent to you the *Reverse* of the *double-minded* Man's Life, and to shew you the *opposite* Advantages of living honestly and uprightly.

1. He who lives uprightly, goes upon *firm* and *stanch* Principles, such as these; that there is a *God* that governs the World, that inspects all the Thoughts and Actions of Men, and will reward or punish them with *eternal* Happiness or Misery: Which being founded upon as *full* Evidence as the Nature of the Thing will bear, and attested by the *inmost* Sense of *Human* Nature, by the Consent of *wise* Men of all *Ages*, *Nations*, and *Religions*; and in short, by the *unanimous* Vote of Mankind; are such as will endure the Test of our *severest* Reason, and give *ample* Satisfaction of their Truth to the most *inquisitive* Minds. The *upright* Man therefore, proceeding upon such Principles as these, treads upon *firm* Ground, which, he is secure, will never sink under him; and, which is more, if it should, will in the End leave him in as *good* Condition, as those who proceed upon the *contrary* Principles. For whereas if their Principles prove false, their acting upon them will prove their *eternal* Ruin; if his should prove so, he will live more at Ease for them, more suitably to his Nature, and more satisfied with himself; and when he dies, he will only be left in the *same* Condition with *them*, in a State of *eternal* Sleep and Insensibility. So that if his Principles should prove *false*, he can never be the worse for acting upon them; but if they should prove *true*, he will be infinitely the better. And 'tis a vast Security to the Mind, to proceed upon such Principles, as, if they prove *false*, will leave us *safe* and at *rest*; and if they prove *true*, will leave us *eternally* happy.

2. The *upright Man* walks in a *plain*, *easy*, and *direct* Way. Those *eternal* Tracts of Righteousness and Goodness wherein he walks, are so plainly *characterized* upon his Heart and Conscience, by the Finger of *God*, and described and inculcated in the *divine* Oracles, with so bright a Sun-beam, that if he honestly enquire, he cannot miss them; and when he hath found them, he cannot easily swerve from them. For whereas Wickedness is a *boundless* Wilderness, whose *Paths* do all *thwart* and *cross* one another; all Vices consisting in *Extreams*, which are *direct* Contraries, and being either the Defects or Excesses of some Vertue; so that there are not only two *Vices* to every one *Vertue*; but both are *Extreams* running counter to one another: The Paths of Vertue lie straight forward between these *vicious* Extreams; and like *parallel Lines*, never interfere. So that here a Man may walk on safely without any *great* Reach of Wit, or *laborious* Diligence of Enquiry, and needs do no more than follow *Solomon's* Direction: *Let thine Eyes look right on, and let thine Eye-lids look straight before thee. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left*, Prov. 4. 24, 27. Here, according to the Prophet, is an *High-way*, called the *Way of Holiness*; the *Way-faring-Men*, tho' *Fools*, shall not err therein, Isaiah 35. 8. And having so *plain* and *direct* a Way before him, he needs neither tire himself in the Search of it, nor rack his Brains with any *anxious* Deliberations in the Choice of it, nor grate his Mind with Scruples and *galling* Regrets in the Pursuit of it; but may always find it with Ease, and follow it with Security.

3. The *upright* Man acts *openly* without Fear of Discovery : For being conscious to himself, both that his Intentions are *clear*, and his Prosecutions of them *fair* and *honest*, he could be well enough content, that he had a *Window* into his Breast, that all the World might see through him. He knows, that his Thoughts and Actions are such as will endure sounding, and bear sitting to the Bottom ; and therefore takes no care to disguise himself in *false* Shews and Appearances. For he who can reflect upon *himself* with Satisfaction and Complacency, may look all the World in the Face with Confidence and Assurance ; as knowing that the more *curiously* he is watch'd, and the more exactly scanned, the more highly he shall be approved by all that are *wise* and *good*. And tho' his Reputation may for a while be clouded by *Malice* or *Mistake* ; yet he is fully satisfied, that *one* time or *other* the very Light of Things will scatter these *Mists*, and clear these *Misprisions* ; and that then he shall shine the *brighter* for being *over-cast*. And being thus satisfied, he walks openly through the World with a *bare* Face, and in the Sight of the Sun, having no Occasion to skulk into Coverts and Retirements.

4. The *upright* Man lives in Peace with himself, and in an *amicable* Accord with his own Reason and Conscience. For he who follows his Reason and makes his Conscience for his Guide (as every *upright* Man doth) can neither be reproached by the *one*, nor condemned by the *other* ; and having to all his Aims and Actions, the *full* Approbation of his Reason and Conscience, in *reiterated* *Eccho's* resounding after him, he hath always *good* Weather within, and a *clear* Sky about him ; wherein his Mind breathes none but *calm* and *wholesome* Thoughts, and hath a *hopeful* Confidence, and a *cheerful* Satisfaction in every Thing he doth ; as being *agreeable* to his *own* Reason, *conformable* to his Duty, and *worthy* of himself. And being thus crowned with the Applauses of *his own* Conscience, he goes on thro' all the *Difficulties* of Life, with Alacrity and Courage, having nothing from within to countermand or controul him, no Sting of *Remorse* for what he hath done, nor *Check* or *Struggling* against what he is doing ; nothing to pull him back from his Way, or to cause him to halt in it, or any way to disturb and distract him in his Motion. And when at any time he is balk'd, and defeated in any of his *honest* Designs and Prosecutions, he goes on with an *exact* Mind under the Disappointment, triumphing in the Integrity of his Heart, and the Innocence of his Procedure ; having a *Paradise within* him, where he lives at Ease, and enjoys himself in Serenity and Peace, let Things be never so *stormy* and *tempestuous* without.

5. The *upright* Man is secure of the *good* Issues and Events of his *honest* Aims and Prosecutions : Not that he is confident, that things shall always succeed according to his present Aims and Desires ; but this he is sure of, that they shall always succeed as *God* would have them, who is *wiser* than he, and loves him better than he loves himself. He is satisfied with *this*, that *God* will never cross him, but for very *good* Reasons ; such Reasons, as if himself did fully comprehend, would make him heartily wish that *God* in his *tender* Mercy would cross and disappoint him : And living under this Persuasion, he is secure in *his own* Mind, that he shall either have what he desires, or something better in Exchange. He builds upon this, that if what he is projecting, be good for him, it shall certainly succeed according to his Wishes ; but that whether it be good for him or no, *God* knows better than he, and therefore if it doth not succeed, it is well for him that it doth not ; because *God* certainly knew that it was not *good* for him that it should : And to be disappointed of those Hopes, which he fancies are *good* for him, is a Thousand times more for his Interest, than to be gratified ; which, *God* knows, will be *hurtful* to him : Because he is certain, both that he may be mistaken, and that *God* cannot. Wherefore let the worst that *can* arrive, (or that which through his Blindness and Folly, he esteems the worst ;) this he depends upon, that matters being rightly stated, he shall in the Issue of Things come off very well, so as to be a Gainer in the Foot of the Account ; and being thus persuaded, his Mind is not harrassed like other Mens, with *anxious* Thoughts concerning the Event ; but

let what will happen, he goes on with a *calm* and *satisfied* Mind, and embraces his Fortune with Satisfaction and Complacency.

6. And Lastly, He hath a *fair* and *glorious* Prospect before him of the Issue and Events of all. The Sence of *his own* Integrity and Uprightness hath raised him to a *glorious* Hope, whereon he stands, like *Moses* on the Top of *Pisgah*, surveying the Heavenly *Canaan*, whose *fruitful* Soil abounds with every Good, and flows with everlasting Pleasure: From whence with joyful *Eyes* he sees the happy Period of his *tedious* March through this *barren Wilderness* of Life: He sees the *blissful Mansions* and *abodes* that the God of Love hath prepared to receive him: He sees them most richly furnished with all the *Delights* that his vast *hungry Desires* can crave or swallow, to *eternal Ages*. He sees, that there is nothing but a short momentary Death, that like the *River Jordan*, separates this *Wilderness* from that *heavenly Land*; and that as soon as ever he hath passed and loded this, his Travel will conclude in *endless* Rest and Pleasure, in the Accomplishment of all *his Hopes*, and the full Satisfaction of all *his Wishes*. With the Prospective of *his Faith* and *Hope* he beholds the *illustrious Orders* of *Angels*, the *glorious Company* of *Apostles*, the *goodly Fellowship* of *Prophets*, the *noble Army* of *Martyrs*, with *Crowns* of *Glory* and *Blessedness* on their *Heads*, beckoning to him from the farther Shore, to make haste thither, and come into the *joyous* Participation of their *Society* and *Happiness*. The Sight of all which *glorious Things*, inspires his Heart with such an Addition of new Life and Vigour, as carries him on with *Chearfulness* and *Alacrity* through all the *weary Stages* of his Life: For he who walks with *Heaven* in his Eye, is a *thousand times* happier in his Expectation, than if he had all the *Goods* this World affords, in his Possession. The *upright Man* therefore, having this blessed Expectation before him, he goes on with a bold and secure Mind, and in his Course, is *stedfast* and *immovable*, always abounding in the *Word of the Lord*; forasmuch as he knows that his *Labour* shall not be in vain in the *Lord*. Seeing therefore the vast *Advantages* Integrity and Uprightness hath of *Double dealing*, as we tender our own Ease and Security, let us all study for the future, to lead the Remainder of our *Lives* in exact Sincerity and Simplicity of Heart; which will not only extricate us from the *greatest Difficulties* and *Perplexities* of this *present Life*, but also crown us with *immortal Ease* and *Happiness* in the Life to come. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant: To whom be Honour, and Glory, and Praise, from this time forth and for ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE XII.

UPON

I JOHN v. 3.

For this is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments ; and his Commandments are not grievous.

IN the first Verse, the *Apostle* asserts, that *whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ*, that is, so believes, as to act suitable to his Belief, is *born of God* ; he is become a Child of God, by partaking of his Nature, and stamp'd with his Likeness ; and every one that loveth him that begat, i. e. God his Heavenly Father, loveth him also that is begotten of him ; hath a true hearty Kindness for all that are God's Children. And then in the second Verse, by this, saith he, we know that we love the Children of God, and consequently, that we are *born of God*, if we love God, and keep his Commandments ; that is, if we so love him, as to keep his Commandments. And indeed, if we do not so love him, we do not love him at all, and consequently, we do not love his Children ; nor are we his Children our selves : Of which he gives a full Proof in the Text ; *for this is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments ; and his Commandments are not grievous.*

In which Words, you have, First, an Account of the Love of God, what it is ; *This is the Love of God that we keep his Commandments* : And Secondly, a Motive to engage us to the Practice of it, *and his Commandments are not grievous.*

I begin with the first of these, the Account of this Love of God, what it is ; *This is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments.* By the Love of God here, we are not to understand God's Love to us, but our Love to God ; as is plain by this, because 'tis placed in our keeping his Commandments. This is the Love of God ; that is, this is the *natural Effect* and *proper Exercise* of the Love of God : For it is certain, that keeping God's Commandments, is not the Affection of Love to him ; but the *Effect* of it. So that the meaning of the Words is this ; this is the most *genuine Expression* and *inseparable Effect* of our Love of God, that we obey his Laws. And hence our Saviour makes this the *proper Trial* and *Proof* of Our Love to him, *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*, John 14. 15. For this he tells us, *Ver. 23.* is the *necessary Consequence* of our Love to him ; *If any Man love me, he will keep my Words*, i. e. this will most certainly be the *Effect* of his Love to me, that he will be obedient to my Will. And by this he plainly tells us, he will judge of the Sincerity of our Friendship to him, *John 15. 14. Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* From all which it is evident, that the most *proper* and *characteristical Expression* of our Love to God, is our keeping his Commandments.

And indeed, considering that God is our *Sovereign Law giver*, there are no Actions by which we can so naturally express our Affection to him, as by those of Obedience and Submission to his Laws : And therefore we find in *Scripture*, that to love God, and obey his Laws ; and to hate God, and disobey them, are generally used promiscuously for one another ; and that for very good reason : For here our Love and Hatred of God are not considered as conversant about
God

God as God (in which Sence perhaps, there is no Creature in the World can be said to hate him) but as convariant about him as *Lord and Governour* of the World; as he gives Laws to Mankind, whereby he commands them what to do, and forbids them what to avoid. And in this Sence, to love God, is to love him as *Governing and Commanding*; and as such we can no otherwise express our Love to him, but by keeping his Commandments. But for the farther clearing of this, I shall in Prosecution of the Argument, do these two Things:

I. Shew you, that wheresoever the Love of God is, it will most certainly prove a *Principle* of Obedience to him.

II. That the Love of God is in it self the most *perfect* and *effectual* Principle of Obedience.

1. That wheresoever the Love of God is, it will most certainly prove a *Principle* of Obedience to him. And this, I doubt not, will evidently appear, if we consider, that all the *natural* Expressions of our Love, as it is terminated upon God, do of their own accord, finally resolve themselves into Obedience to his Will. For Love, wheresoever it is *heartly* and *sincere*, always expresses it self in such *Symptoms* as these;

1. In industriously endeavouring to resemble the *Beloved*.
2. In conforming the *Will, Designs and Intentions*, to the *Will, and Designs, and Intentions* of the *Beloved*.
3. In a *solicitous* Care of avoiding those Things which may any ways displease or distaste the *Beloved*.
4. In a *cheerful* Readiness to undergo any thing, be it never so *hard* or *difficult*, for the sake of the *Beloved*. All which Expressions of our Love, when it is terminated upon God, do most *naturally* run into Obedience to his Will.

1. If we love God, our Love will express it self in endeavouring to resemble him. For every Man esteems what he loves, to be lovely; and we naturally wish, that *that* were in our selves which we esteem to be lovely in *another*; that so being like him, we may appear as lovely in *his* Eyes, as he doth in *ours*. And so if we love God, we must necessarily esteem him exceeding lovely and amiable; and that which we esteem and love as lovely in him, we cannot but wish for, and desire in our selves, out of a *natural* Affection of Loveliness: And that he may have the same Reason to love us, as we have to love him, we must needs desire to resemble him in all those *amiable* Things that do endear him to us. But now those Beauties in God being all of them only *moral*, which are the *immediate* Objects of our Love to him, are capable of being transcribed by Imitation, and made ours by *copying* and *writing* after them in our Actions: So that if we heartily desire to partake of them, our Desire will necessarily engage us to imitate them: For how can we be said heartily to desire that *Good* which we may have, but will take no Care to acquire? And confess, did we love him for his *Eternity*, or his *Power*, or his *Immensify*, we might wish to be like him, but all in vain; because in these Perfections we are not capable of imitating him: But the Beauties for which we love him, are his *Goodness*, and *Wisdom*, and *Righteousness*, and *Mercy*, and the like; all which being *imitable* by us, we may, if we please, derive into our selves, and transcribe into *our own* Natures. So that if we love God, we must necessarily desire to resemble him in those Things for which we love him; and those Things being all of an *imitable* Nature, our Desire of resembling him, will oblige and excite us to a *careful* and *constant* Imitation of him. But now to obey God, and to imitate him in those *Moral Perfections*, for which we love him, are one and the same thing. Thus, when I obey God, in being universally *just* and *righteous* towards himself and all his Creation, I imitate him in that *essential* Justice and Equity of his Nature, which is the *eternal* Rule of all his Actions. When I obey him

him in *doing good* to all that are within the Reach of my Charity, I imitate him in the *overflowing* Bounty and unlimited Goodness of his Nature. In a word, when I obey him in forgiving those that injure me, I imitate him in his *boundless* Mercy, and Readiness to forgive Offenders. And in fine, all our Obedience is comprehended in being *pure* as he is *pure*, and *holy* as he is *holy*; in being *good* as he is *good*, *just* as he is *just*, *merciful* as he is *merciful*: For though the Acts and Expressions of these *Moral Perfections* in us, are in many Instances different from what they are in God, by reason of that Difference of *Natures, Relations* and *Circumstances* that there is between him and us; yet the Perfections in *general*, are of the same kind in him and us, though the *particular* Expressions of them are various by reason of those *accidental* Differences. For though he doth not do all those *particular* Actions which he requires of us; and consequently, we, in doing those Actions, cannot be said to imitate God in the general, in doing those Actions, which he himself would have done, had he had our Natures, and been in our Relations and Circumstances. Thus, God doth not pray, because he hath none *superior* to him; nor humble himself, because he is infinitely *great* and *perfect*; nor practise *Chastity* and *Temperance*, because he is a *pure Spirit*, and hath no Commerce with *bodily* Affections; and consequently, we, in doing of these Actions, cannot be said to imitate the same Actions in God, because he doth not the same. But he constantly doth whatsoever is reasonable for him to do as God, and as *Governour* of the World; and never varies in the least *Punctilio*, from the *eternal* Rules of Equity and Goodness; by which he gives a *glorious* Example unto all his Reasonable Creatures, to excite both *Angels* and *Men* to do what is fit and reasonable for them in their several States and Relations: And what is reasonable for us Men to do, he hath declared to us in his Laws; so that by obeying his Laws, we imitate God in the general, by doing what is reasonable for us; though what is reasonable for God and us, whose Natures and Relations are so different, be not the same in all *particular* Instances. So that in general, you see, to obey and imitate God, is but the same Thing in other Words. Wherefore since the Love of God doth necessarily include a Desire of resembling him, and that Desire necessarily produces a *constant* and *vigorous* Imitation of him, and that Imitation is all one with obeying him; it hence necessarily follows, that if our Love of him be sincere, it must finally resolve to Obedience. For how can I love God, and not think him lovely? How can I think him lovely, and not desire to be *like* him? How can I desire to be *like* him, and not take Care to imitate him? And how else can I imitate him, but by obeying him?

2. If we love God, our Love will conform our *Wills, Designs, and Intentions* to the *Will, Designs, and Intentions* of God. For Love always unites the Will of the *Lover* to the Will of the *Beloved*: And if it be mutual, it unites them together into one Will, and confounds all their Discords into a *perfect* Harmony; because Love doth necessarily conclude in it Benevolence, which consists in an *unfeigned* Will that all may go well with him whom we love; that he may enjoy every *Good* that he wills, and accomplish every *Desire, Design, and Intention*, so far as it is *good* and *reasonable* for him. So that supposing that the *Beloved* be but his own Friend, that he wills and pursues nothing but what is *good* and *grateful* to him; the *Lover*, as such, ought necessarily to conspire with him in the same Will, and Designs, and Pursuits. If therefore we heartily love God, we cannot but *will* what he *wills*, and design and intend what he intends and designs; every Motion of that *first great* Mover will be an *effectual* Law to govern all our Motions; and our Wills, and Desires, and Designs, and Intentions, like the *lesser* Wheels of an *Automaton*, will presently run at the first Impulse of the great Master-Wheel, without the least Rub or Hesitation; and in despite of all the Contentions of a *rebellious* Flesh, and all the Counter-strivings of a *perverse ungovernable* Heart, our Love will so captivate our Wills to God's, that between him and us, there will be but one Will, and End, and Interest. And our Wills being thus subjected to him by the *invincible* Necessity of Love, all our *inferior* Powers, like smaller *Garrisons*, when the *Master-Fort* is taken, will presently surrender of their own accord. For

no Man can be a Rebel to God, whether he will or no ; because the Will is the *Commanding* Principle, and hath such an *absolute* Empire over all our Actions, that 'tis impossible for us to do what he will not. So that if we *will* and design what God *wills* and designs, our Practice must necessarily be conformable to his Will, so far as we know and understand it : For as God's Will gives Law to ours ; so our Will gives Law to our Actions ; and so by consequence, the Will of God must be the *Sovereign* Law whereby both are regulated and determined. From hence therefore it is evident, that if we sincerely love God, we shall *will* as he *wills* ; and that if we *will* as he *wills*, we shall act as he would have us : And therefore, for any Man to say, that he loves God, while he *wills* contrary to his Will ; or that his Will is reconciled to God's, while he acts contrary to his Commands, is *gross* Hypocrisy and *deep* Dissimulation : For as the Love of God resolves necessarily into an Union of Wills with him ; so that Union of Wills resolves necessarily into Obedience to his Laws.

3. If we love God, that Love will express it self in a *sollicitous* Care of avoiding every thing that may displease or distaste him. For the *greatest* Ambition of Love, is to appear lovely and amiable in the Eyes of its *Beloved* ; and that it may do so, it doth most studiously avoid whatsoever may be displeasing or distasteful to it ; and most industriously endeavours to adorn it self with all those *obliging* Graces that are apt to endear and recommend it. And so if we love God, we cannot but desire to be lovely in his Eyes ; and *that* Desire if it be sincere and hearty, must necessarily engage us to an Endeavour of acquiring whatsoever is *amiable* and *pleasing*, and of avoiding whatsoever is *hateful* and *grievous* to him. But now *Vertue* and *true Goodness*, are the only Beauties to endear us to God, and render us lovely in his Eyes ; and *Sin* and *Wickedness*, the only Deformities for which he hates and abhors us : For his *Love* and *Hatred* are not regulated like ours, by the *unaccountable* Impulses of a *mutable* Fancy ; but by *steady* and *eternal* Rules ; so that he can never love what he once hated, nor hate what he once loved. For the Immutability of God's *Love* and *Hatred* consists not in this, that he always loves and hates Persons for the same Reason and Motive. And indeed, that *Love* is but a foolish *Fondness* ; that *Hatred* but an unreasonable *Antipathy*, that, without any reasonable *Motive*, always determines on the same Person : And if God *loves* and *hates* our Persons upon *reasonable* Motives, his *Love* and *Hatred* would be *fickle* and *mutable*, if when those Motives cease, his *Love* and *Hatred* should continue. If he should continue to love us, when the Reason is wholly ceased that first moved him thereunto, he must either love us for no Reason, which would be a foolish *Fondness* ; or he must love us for *contrary* Reasons, which would be *Fickleness* and *Inconstancy* : And therefore when God ceases to *love* and *hate* the *same* Persons, when the Reason of his loving and hating them ceases, it proceeds not from the Inconstancy, but the Immutability of his *Love* and *Hatred* : For though they may change their Objects, yet they can never change their Reasons. For the Reasons of God's *Love* and *Hatred* are in the Objects whom he *loves* and *hates* ; and therefore, if he changes the Objects of his *Love* and *Hatred* ; and when they themselves are chang'd, if he love a Person whom he hated, when that Person is chang'd from *hateful* to *lovely* ; or hate a Person whom he loved, when that Person is changed from *lovely* to *hateful* ; it is not he that changes, but the Persons that are the Objects of his Love or his Hatred : For amidst all Changes of Objects, his *Love* and *Hatred* are eternally the *same* ; because they are eternally fixed and determined, to the *same* Reasons. But now his Love being naturally founded in *Likeness*, what can we suppose, should be the Reason of God's *Love* or *Hatred* to us, but only our *Likeness* or *Unlikeness* to himself ? For if we resemble him in that *Goodness*, and *Truth*, and *Purity*, and *Justice*, which are *essential* to his Nature, he must needs love us for his own sake ; because we partake of his Nature, and are allied to him by a Similitude of Temper and Perfections. But then, when we are not only unlike, but contrary to him ; when we are *impure*, *spightful*, and *malicious* ; when we are *false*, *unrighteous*, and *unreasonable* ; he hath an *Antipathy* against us, founded in his very Nature ; and he

he can no more love us, whilst we are so contrarily disposed to him, than he can hate himself. Wherefore since there is nothing can render us lovely in God's Eyes, but only our resembling him in *Purity* and *Goodness*; nothing can render us *hateful*, *offensive* and *distasteful* to him, but our being *impure*, and *wicked*, and *unlike* him; it hence necessarily follows, that we can no otherwise render our selves *amiable* to him, no otherwise avoid offending and grieving him, but only by keeping his Commandments: For therein all those *Graces* are enjoined wherein our Resemblance of him consists; and all those *Vices* are forbid, that are contrary to him, and do deform us in his Eyes. So that by doing his Will, we imitate his Nature; and shall acquire such a *Godlike* Temper of Mind, as will render us more *glorious* and *lovely* in his Esteem, than if we were deck'd with Stars, or cloathed in a Robe of Sun-beams: Whereas on the contrary, by disobeying his Will, we contract such an *Unlikeness* and *Contrariety* to him, as renders us more offensive to him, than the most *loathsome* Deformities in Nature. For in God's Eyes there is nothing ugly but Sin, nothing amiable but Vertue and true Goodness. Wherefore since our Love of God necessarily includes an earnest Desire of rendring our selves lovely and amiable in his Esteem; and since we have no other way to accomplish this Desire, but only by keeping his Commandments; it necessarily follows, that we cannot sincerely love him, whilst we disobey him. For with what Confidence can we pretend to love him, when it is indifferent to us whether we render our selves *lovely* or *loathsome* to him; when by disobeying his Will, we wilfully contract those Deformities, which we know, he abhors; and which are more *odious* in his Eyes, than any of the most *loathsome* Spectacles in Nature? Is it possible, that true Love should consist with taking Pleasure in the only Things that can grieve and offend its Object? Or were there ever such *Lovers* heard of, that affected the Deformities that were most *hateful* to the *Beloved*? No, no; he that heartily loves, must desire to be beloved; and he that desires to be beloved, must desire to be lovely. Wherefore since nothing is lovely in God's Eyes, but what is like God; and we cannot be like him, unless we keep his Commandments; what an Immodesty is it in us, to pretend to love him, while we chuse to disobey him?

4. And Lastly, If we love God sincerely, we shall be ready chearfully to undergo any thing for his sake, be it never so *hard* and *difficult*: For Love is a *bold* and *vigorous* Passion; it makes *weak* Things Strong, and turns *Cowards* into *Heroes*, and warms and animates the Heart with such a *generous* Fire, as disdains all Opposition, and courageously *out-braves* the *greatest* Dangers and Difficulties. For he that loves heartily, would do any Thing for the sake of his *Beloved*; and then measuring his Strength by the Greatness of his Desires, he thinks himself able to do whatever he will. So strongly doth his Passion transport Nature beyond the Bounds of its Abilities, inspiring it with such Force and Vigour, as that scarce any Thing is able to withstand it. If therefore we love God sincerely and heartily, our Love must necessarily resolve into Obedience to his Will, be it never so *hard* and *difficult*: For our Love will *enliven* and *animate* our Endeavours of serving him, and carry us with such Spirit and Alacrity through all the *weary* Stages of our Duty, that it will be our Meat and Drink to do his *Will*: And there is no Instance of Obedience, be it never so hard and difficult, but our Love will *smother*, and render it not only *easy*, but *delightful*. For what I do for *him* whom I love, I do for my self; *his* Pleasures being *mine*, and our *Wills*, and *Ends*, and *Interests* being involved in one *another*. So that if my Love be in any Measure *intense* and *cordial*, I shall do his Pleasure, and perform his *Will* with the same Complacency and Delight, as if I were doing my own; and whatsoever Difficulties I meet with in serving him, I shall encounter them with Joy, that I am furnished with Opportunities of expressing the Zeal and Sincerity of my Love to him. So that to pretend to love God, and yet to boggle at the Difficulties of obeying him, is the most *shameful* Hypocrisie in Nature: For if we did as highly love him as we pretend, our *Wills* would be swallowed up in *his*, that it would be our Joy and Recreation to serve him; and the very Thought that we are doing what is *pleasing*

and *grateful* to him, would level all the *Mountains* of Difficulties in our Way, and render them not only *accessible*, but *easy*. He therefore that stumbles at every Straw, and startles at every Difficulty in *Religion*, must be a *notorious* Hypocrite, if he pretend to the Love of God : For where *true* Love is, Difficulty is so far from daunting it, that that animates and encourages it ; and instead of blunting its Activity, whets and renders it more keen and vigorous ; because the *greater* the Difficulty is, the *greater* is its Opportunity of manifesting *its own* Sincerity, and thereby of recommending it self to its *Beloved* ; the Joy of which not only balances, but endears all its *Pains* and *Trouble*. Hence the Apostle tells us, that *there is no Fear in Love, and that perfect Love casteth out Fear*, 1 John 4. 18. It inspires us with such *Bravery* and *Courage*, that there is no Difficulty in our Obedience to him whom we love, that can daunt or terrifie us. Wherefore since this is a necessary Property of the Love of God to make us ready to undergo any thing for his sake, this also must necessarily resolve into the keeping his Commandments : For if we are willing to do any thing for God, we shall surely be willing to obey him ; and though our Obedience in some Instances may be difficult ; yet our Love, if it be real, will conquer its Way through them all.

And thus you see how all the *essential* Properties of the Love of God do finally resolve into Obedience : From whence it is evident, that where-soever the Love of God is, it will most certainly prove a *Principle* of Obedience.

II. I proceed now to the Second Head of Discourse ; which was to shew, that the *Love of God* is in it self the *most perfect Principle of Obedience*. Not that I think all *other* Principles in their own Nature *bad* : For God himself hath proposed other Principles of Action to us, besides this of Love ; he hath denounced his *fearful* Threatenings against us, to alarm our *Fear*, that by that we may be moved to obey him ; and propounded his *glorious* Promises to us, to excite our *Hope*, that that may be a Spring and Principle of Obedience in us. And certainly, that can be no *bad* Principle, which is incited in us by divine Motives : But yet it is most certain, that there is no Principle whatsoever can be acceptable to God, that is quite separated from Love to him : For that which makes it acceptable, is this, that it is a Principle of *Universal* Obedience. But now the Love of God being the *greatest* Instance of our Obedience, that can be no Principle of *universal* Obedience, that is wholly separated from it. 'Tis true, the *Religion* of most Men begins upon a Principle, either of *Hope* or *Fear* ; and it cannot be denied, but they are very *good* Beginners : But yet, till by these, we are induced to love God, as well as to practise all other Duties, we are by no means *pleasing* and *acceptable* to him : So that though the *Fear of Punishment*, and the *Hope of Reward*, are *good* Ingredients in the Principle of our Obedience ; yet till they have some Intermixtures of Love with them, they can make no Claim to the *divine* Acceptation. There may be indeed, and at first there generally is, much less of *Love* in this Principle of Obedience, than of *Hope* and *Fear* ; whilst yet the whole Composition is very acceptable to God : For the *lowest* Degree of *cordial* Love, intermixed with our *Hope* and *Fear*, will leaven and consecrate them into an *acceptable* Principle of Obedience : But still, the *less* Love there is in it, the *more weak*, and *languid*, and *imperfect* it is ; and in all its Progress towards Perfection, its Maturity is to be measured by the Degrees of Love that are in it ; and till our Love is arrived unto that Degree of Ardency, as to become the *predominant* Motive and Master Ingredient in it, our State in *Goodness* is very *slow* and *imperfect*. So that, in short, the Principle of our Obedience is more and more perfect, the *more* of *Love* there is in it, and the *less* of *Hope* and *Fear* ; and when *Hope* and *Fear* are all swallowed up in *Love*, and that is the *sole* Spring of Action within us ; then it is the Principle of *Heaven*, and the Soul that acts and animates the *Religion of the Spirits of just Men made perfect*. But to convince you how much our Obedience is perfected by Love, I shall briefly give you these following Instances of it :

1. It rendereth our Obedience *universal* and *unconfined*.
2. *Sprightly* and *cheerful*.
3. *Natural* and *easie*.
4. *Constant* and *steady*.

1. Love renders our Obedience *universal* and *unconfined*. When Men are acted only by a Principle of *Fear*, they must be very *narrow* and *stingy* in their *Religion*: For they will be sure to do no more than just what is Necessary to *quiet* their Fears, and *calm* their Consciences; and because they do not like what they do, but are merely forced upon it by the Terror and Anguish of *their own* Minds; therefore, if they can, they will find some Way to pacify their Consciences without doing it; or at least, with doing as little as may be, or with doing that only which they like *best*, and is most *agreeable* to their *vitiating* Tempers. Thus Persons of *sour* and *morose* Natures, when they are acted merely by the Terrors of their Consciences, commonly betake themselves to some *little affected* Singularities and Severities in *Religion*; they will put on some *distinguishing* Garb, and tip their Tongues with some *peculiar* Phrases, and screw their Faces into a most *devout* and *mortified* Figure; they will condemn themselves into a State of *Silence*, and retire from all the Pleasures and most *innocent* Festivities of Conversation; they will frown all *good* Humour out of their Houses, and will not endure so much as a Smile in their Families, especially on the *Lord's Day*; and take a world of Care and Pains, to moan their Children into *unsociable* Statues, and to train them up in the *Religion* of *pensive* Looks, and *solemn* Faces, and *ejaculated* Eyes: For this is such a Reformation, as is suitable to their *sour* and *surly* Natures; and therefore with this, they will seek to bribe their Consciences to connive at all their *black* and *devilish* Inclinations. Thus also it is usual for *Slanders* and *Backbiters*, *contentious* and *cenfurious* Persons, when they are under an Agony of Conscience, to lift themselves into some *Sect* or *Party*, where, under the Pretence of being the only People of God, they may consecrate their own *unhallowed* Passions, and rail and backbite with *Zeal* and *Devotion*; where they may spit all their Venom in *spiritual* Gossiping, and freely employ the Talent of their Ill-nature in *damning* and censuring those they dissent from: For this is such a Conversation as best agrees with their *cankorous* Inclinations; so that if they can but cheat their Conscience with it, *that* and their *beloved* Lust will be very well reconciled. Thus also the *Covetous* and *Gripping* Oppressor, when he cannot otherwise still the Cries of his Conscience, will betake himself to some of the *cheaper* Exercises of *Religion*; he will *fast* and *pray*, hear *Sermons*, and receive *Sacraments*, because all these things he can do without intrenching upon his Vice; he can say his *Prayers* for nothing, and save Money by keeping a *Fast*, and eat and drink at the Sacrament *gratis*; all this is so *cheap* a *Religion*, that it costs him nothing to maintain it, and so his *covetous* Mind hath no reason to grudge at it: So that if his Conscience will be satisfied with this, his Lust and *that* may shake hands and be Friends. And to name no more, thus when the *intemperate* and *lascivious* Person is dogg'd by the Fears of his *guilty* Mind, it is usual for him to sigh and mourn, and make *woful* Confessions of his Sins; and when he hath done so, to endeavour, to persuade himself, that this is *true* Repentance; which if he can do, he may sin on securely, provided he doth but perpetually keep himself in this Circle of *repenting* and *sinning*, and *sinning* and *repenting*: But if he cannot so cheat himself, he will next fly to the *Sanctuary* of a *partial* Reformation, and disband the Vices he can best spare, that so he may keep his more *beloved* ones in Pay; hoping that by a Sacrifice of some *few* of his Sins, he may make an Atonement for all the rest. Thus, when Men are only acted by their Fears, they will find some way or *other* to Contract their *Religion* into so *narrow* a Compass, that it will be sure not to intrench *too* far upon the Liberties of their Lusts. For he that doth a Thing out of Fear, is averse to doing it; and that Aversion will so flint and limit him, that he will contrive all Ways to do as little as he can; and still the *less* he is forced to do, the *better* he will be pleased.

But

But Love is that great Soul that acts and animates the *whole* Body of Religion, and equally diffuses its Influence through every Part and Member of it: For the Will of the *Beloved* is the Law of the *Lover*; and every Thing pleases him, that is pleasing to *him* whom he loves. So that if we love God, we shall do what he commands, because it is his Will and Pleasure; and that Reason extends equally to all, as well as any Instances of Obedience; and therefore if the Motive of our Obedience be this; that it is God's Will and Pleasure, we must necessarily obey him, so far as we understand, in every thing that is so. For if we love God, there will be such a Consent and Harmony between his Will and ours, that we shall be best pleased with what pleases him; and being so, our Obedience will be no longer limited by any *particular Likes or Dislikes* of our own; which will then all vail and prostrate themselves to God's *sovereign* Pleasure; and there will be nothing but that to set Limits and Bounds to our Obedience. So that then we shall be so far from contriving how to escape doing his Will, that we shall be ready to court all Opportunities of pleasing him, and be so passionately desirous of doing what we think is grateful to him, that we shall not only perform what he requires, by explicate Command; but be ready to comply with the most *secret* Notices, and Intimations of his Pleasure, and to do whatsoever we think will please him, when it is performed, whether it be commanded or no.

2. Love renders our Obedience *sprightly* and *vigorous*: For it is certain there is no Passion in *Human* Nature, so *active* and *vigorous*, as that of Love: For in this all the other Passions are seated as in their *common* Root and Principle; and like so many Streams, though they run *several* Ways, and in *different* Channels, yet do they all issue out of one *common* Spring, and that is Love. For the Love of *our* selves is the *Parent* of all our Passions; 'tis that which makes us *bate* what is contrary to us, and *desire* and *hope* for whatsoever is pleasant and agreeable. And when we love any *particular* Object, and our Wills are pleasingly affected with the Beauty of it, if it be a Thing that is possible for us to enjoy, that excites in us a *Desire* of Enjoyment; if together with the Possibility, there be a Probability of enjoying it, that excites *Hope* and *Expectation*: But if there be not, that excites *Fear*; and this *Hope* and *Fear* being exalted to their *highest* Degree, turn into *Confidence* and *Desperation*. If any Difficulty oppose it self to our Enjoyment, that excites *Choler*, and *Courage*, and *Boldness*; and if we surmount those Difficulties that hindred our Enjoyment, that excites *Joy* and *Exultation* of Mind. Thus Love, you see, as soon as it is taken with the Beauty of an Object, immediately kindles its *Desires*, excites its *Hope* and *Fear*, and carries the Fire into all the Passions, which hold of its Empire: So that having the *united* Force of all the other Passions at its Beck and Command, its self must needs be extremely *potent* and *vigorous*; and consequently, when it is terminated upon God, and become the *reigning* Principle of our Obedience to him, there is no Passion in our Natures can have that Influence upon us, to make us *active* and *vigorous* in the doing of his Will, as *this* may reasonably be supposed to have; because when we are under the Command of Love, *that* having in it the Force of all our other Passions, must necessarily move and act us with all their *united* Influence. And when the *separate* Force of all our Passions, like so many *single* Threads, are twisted into one Cord, with what a *potent*, I had almost said, *omnipotent* Vigour, must they draw and attract us? When our Love of God shall all at once awaken in us the *Desire* and *Hope* of enjoying him, the *Fear* and *Displeasure* of losing him, the *Resolution* and *Courage* to charge through every Difficulty that opposes our *Fruition* of him; and our Obedience shall be all at once informed and animated with the *united* Force of all those *mighty* Passions; how *active* and *vigorous* must it needs be? For the Wise Man tells us, that *Love is as strong as Death*, Cant. 8. 6. that 'tis an *equal* Match for the *all-conquering* King of Terrors, to whose Power the *mightiest* Things do sloop: And indeed, it must needs be strong, when it hath all the Force of *Human* Nature in it, and is winged with the *united* Vigour of so many *strong* and *active* Affections. Hence the Apostle attributes a *constraining* Virtue

Virtue to it, 2 Cor. 5.14. *For the Love of God constraineth us*; it sweetly tyrannizes over all our Faculties; and by a *willing* Violence, forces and captivates us into Obedience. But when a Man is acted only by a Principle of *Fear*, he must needs drive on heavily in the Course of his Obedience; because what a Man doth out of Fear, he would not do; so that he acts with Aversion, and moves all along counter to *his own* Inclinations, and hath not the *joint* Concurrence of his *other* Affections, as he hath when he acts out of Love; and consequently, his Passions thwarting and crossing *one another*, do retard and hinder each *other's* Motions. So that though the Motion of Fear doth finally prevail, yet it is so broken and weakened by the Counter motions of Inclination, that it cannot act us with that *Sprightliness* and *Vigour* as otherwise it would do: For whilst our Fear gives Wings to us, our Inclination hangs a Clog at our Heels, which wearies those Wings, and slackens and retards their Flight. Whereas, on the contrary, when we are acted by Love, there is no Counter motion within to let and hinder us; but all our Passions unite and conspire; and like the *inferior Orbs* of *Heaven*, move harmoniously with Love, the first *Great Mover*; because there is nothing within to check or allay it; and so we move on freely *secundo flumine*, with the *full* and *uninterrupted* Current of our Natures. So that Love, you see, is a most *active* and *vigorous* Soul; it makes us all Life, and Spirit, and Wing, and animates our *Religion* with such a *sprightly* Flame, as nothing is able to controul or suppress. If therefore we were but once thoroughly informed with the Love of God, this would so enliven us, that there is nothing in *Religion* would be *too hard* for us; this would turn Toils into Recreations, and Difficulties into Pleasures, and make us so *nimble* and *agile* in our Obedience, that we should *run the Way of God's Commandments*, as David said he would do, *when God should enlarge his Heart with the Love of him*, Psal. 119. 32. And whereas *languid* Souls, enfeebled with the Want of this *generous* Passion, find Impossibilities, and complain of Impotencies, and make a Stop; we should go on and conquer with an *invincible* Power. Thus Love, you see, is the most *sprightly* and *vigorous* Principle of Obedience.

3. Love renders our Obedience *free*, and *cheerful*, and *voluntary*. He who obeys God only from a Principle of Fear, obeys him against his Will; he takes down his Duty as *sick Men* do *Physick*, with Loathing and Reluctancy; and only submits to it, as a more *tolerable* Penance than the *present* Horror that he feels, and the after-Damnation that he fears; he only chuses it as the *least* of two *Evils*; that is, as a Thing that he hates, though not in so great a Degree as he doth those greater Evils, which he knows, are inseparable to his not chusing it: And while it is thus with him, it is impossible he should obey with any Freedom or Alacrity. For how can a Man cheerfully comply with what he hates, or become a *Volunteer* to that which is his Torment? He may labour indeed, at his Duty, and tug hard, like a *Gally-slave*, at the Oar; but alas! 'tis sore against his Will: He would fain be at his Lust again, but that he is chained to his Duty, and kept in Awe by that *flaming* Scourge that is held over him: So that he is perfectly pressed to serve God; and like an *unwilling* Victim, is dragged to his Altars. Now though this may be a *good* Beginning of *Religion*, which through the Passion of Fear doth usually make its *first* Entrance into the Soul; yet if it stop here, and doth not pass forwards into Love, it is but but half way, and will never be able to obtain an *entire* Possession. For whilst we obey God merely out of Fear, we want one half of our Religion, and that is Love; which is that Half too, wherein the Subjection of our Souls to God consisteth: For while we only fear him, that may constrain us to an *eternal* Homage and Obedience; but 'tis Love alone that can *enthron* him in our Wills, and make us *Volunteers* in his Service. But when once this *divine* Fire is inkindled within our Breasts, it will by degrees melt away all our *secret* Repugnancies and Aversions to our Duty; and so *mould* and *temper* our Wills to the Will of God, that at last, our Obedience will be no longer a Burthen to us; but we shall run to our Duty with the *same* Complacency and Delight, as we do now to our Pleasures and Recreations; and do

do the Will of our *Father* upon Earth, as it is done by our Brethren in *Heaven* who being all inflamed with Love to him, do find a *Heaven* of Joys in serving and adoring him. For if we did heartily love God, 'tis impossible, but we should feel a Pleasure in pleasing him; our *Wills* would so *sympathize* with *his*, that we should feel *his* Joys, and taste *his* Pleasures: And those Things only would be *irksome* and *ungrateful* to us, which we know, do grieve and displease him. For Love turns Service into Wages, and pays her self with the Pleasures of pleasing; she counts all Commands Favours, and is highly satisfied with the Honour of obeying; and if she can but accomplish the Pleasure of her *Beloved*, she thinks her self wholly recompensed for all her *tedious* Toils and Labours. And certainly, if our Souls were but inspired with any *considerable* Degrees of this *Heavenly* Passion, we should find such Pleasure in pleasing God, as would for ever engage us to serve him: For then every Service that we render'd him, would be a *free* Sally of an enamoured *Will*, and so our Hearts would be wrapp'd up in every Duty, and our Souls would still be ascending *Heavenwards*, like the *Angel* that appeared to *Moses*, in the Flames of all our Sacrifices. So that this Excellency also, Love hath above all other Principles of Obedience, that it renders our Obedience most *free*, most *cheerful*, and *voluntary*.

4. And Lastly, Love renders our Obedience *constant* and *steady*. When a Man's Religion is only animated with Fear, as it is *weak* and *languid* while it lives, so it generally hastens to an untimely Period. For Fear is a Passion so Burthensome to *Human* Nature, that we cannot but desire to quit and discharge our selves of it as soon as possible may be: And accordingly, the *Apostle* tells us, that *there is Torment in Fear*, 1 Joh. 4. 18. For it separates the Soul from the Enjoyment of her self, and gives such an *ungrateful* Tang to her Pleasures, that she can find no Rest or satisfaction in any thing, so long as she is haunted with it. Now when that which is the Principle of our Religion, is a Burthen to us, we cannot but endeavour, if possible, to ease our selves of it; which we cannot otherwise do, but either by going *forwards* to Love, or by returning *back again* to *sinful* Presumption. For as for Fear, it is like the *Wilderness* through which *Israel* passed, a Place where there is no abiding with Content and Satisfaction; so that we must go *back again* into *Egypt*, or *forwards* to *Canaan*, or be content to sit down in Misery and Disquiet. For we can never be at Rest, 'till our Fear is either sweetned with an Intermixture of Love, or stifled with *vain* Hopes and *ungrounded* Presumptions: And there being so many Arts of *Self-deceiving* in the World, and skinning over the Wounds of Conscience, if Men do not speedily cure their Fear by Love, they will soon find some *other* Way to extinguish it; either they will promise their Consciences a *future* Amendment, or else they will *presently* amend by Halves, or else they will take Sanctuary in some *false* Notions in Religion, that tend to secure them in their Sins, and render them quietly wicked: These, or some *other* Ways, they will find, to quit themselves of this *troublesome* Passion; and then, when the *Weights* of their Fear are down, the *Wheels* of their Religion will stand still immediately. So that you plainly see, that *bare* Fear can never be a *lasting* and *steady* Principle of Religion; and that, because it is so troublesome, that Men will not long have the Patience to endure it.

But as for Love, that is naturally a most *sweet* and *grateful* Passion, it soothes and ravishes the Heart, and puts the Spirits into a *brisk* and *generous* Motion; and so long as it continues *pure* Love, is always attended with Joy and Pleasure: And being so in it self, it is much more so when it is terminated upon God. For all the Disquietudes of Love arise from the Imperfections of its *Object*: Either the Person *beloved*, is *cay* and *cruel*, which imbitters the Love with Sorrow and Regret; or else he is *fickle* and *inconstant*, which inflames it with Rage and Jealousie. But when our Love fixes upon God, it hath neither of these Causes of Disturbance: For he is infinitely loving unto all that love him, and he never changes the Objects of his Love, unless they change and prove *fickle* and *unconstant* in their Affection to him. For whilst he hath the same Reason to love, his Love is always the same, and is as *constant* and *immutable* as his Being. So that in the Love of
God

God there is no Reason for any of these Grievances and Jealousies that are so commonly intermingled with carnal *Loves* and *Affections* : For it being fixed upon an *Object* that doth so well deserve, and will so amply requite it, it can find nothing there, but *infinite* Causes of Pleasure and Complacency : For the *Object* of our Love being infinitely lovely, and infinitely loving, the Affection must needs be unspeakably *pleasing* and *grateful*. So that the Love of God, you see, must needs be *sweet* and *serene*, and *productive* of the most *delightful* and *ravishing* Emotions ; there being nothing in him but what tends to its *greatest* Content and Satisfaction : And being so, it must necessarily prove a most *lasting* Principle of Obedience to him ; because whatsoever it is, it is always attended with such *substantial* Pleasures and Delights, that there can be no Temptation to extinguish it : For so long as we feel nothing in it, but what is highly *grateful* to our Natures, we shall be so far from using Arts to quit our selves of it, that we shall think it our *greatest* Interest to promote and increase it. For still, the *more* we love him, the *better* we shall be pleased ; and the *better* we are pleased, the *more* we shall endeavour to love him : And so our Pleasure and our Love will mutually provoke and augment one *another*, till both are arrived to the *utmost* Height of their Perfection. Thus the Love of God, you see, is a *lasting* Principle ; 'tis a Fire that can live upon the Fuel which it self creates ; and maintain it self for ever in Strength and Vigour, by feeding upon the Joys and Pleasures which it produces : So that if this be the Principle upon which we do obey, our *Religion* must needs be *lasting* and *steady*, because it is acted and animated by a Principle that it so.

Having thus demonstrated the Proposition in the Text, *That wheresoever the Love of God is, it will express it self in Obedience to his Will* ; I shall now conclude the whole with some *practical* Inferences.

1. From hence I infer, how necessary it is to the very Being of Religion, to keep up good Thoughts of God in the World ; because without such, Men will never be able to love him ; and without Love, they will never be reduced to a *thorough* Submission to his *heavenly* Will. For it is by Love alone that God reigns in our Hearts, and doth both acquire and preserve the Empire of our Souls. We may be awed into a *forced* and *fawning* Submission, merely by the Dread and Terror of his Power ; and be obliged to serve him as the *Indians* do the *Devil*, for fear he should do us Mischief, and Tear us in pieces ; but this is merely the *Religion* of Slaves, who are forced to undergo *one* Evil, for fear of *another* ; and to do what they hate, for fear of suffering what they cannot endure. And as *Slaves* do generally hate those whom they fear, and even whilst they are *fawning* and *cringing* to their *imperious* Masters, had much rather cut their Throats, if they could do it with safety ; so when Men are acted in their Obedience to God, merely by a *slavish* Dread of his Vengeance, they generally hate him whilst they obey him : And if it were in their power, would rather *ungod* him, and pull him down from his Throne, than render him those *Homages* which they dare not withhold. Now, is it possible, that he who knows the Hearts of Men, and sees the *inmost* Workings of their *Minds*, should ever be pleased with such a *base* and *for-did* Religion ? A Religion that is conjoyned with such an *inveterate* Hatred to his Person and Government, and restrains Men only by Fear of Punishment, from flying in his Face ? A Religion, that is wholly founded in Passion, that causes us to hate him, as well as to fawn upon him ; that carries in it a *secret* Antipathy to his Nature and his Laws ; and would much rather vent it self in an open *Rebellion*, than in a *forced* Submission, had it but Power enough to defend it self from his Fury ? And yet this is the *best* Religion that Mankind is capable of without the Love of God. So that if ever we intend to keep up a *generous* Religion in our Souls, such as becomes *free-born* Minds, to offer to the great *Sovereign* of the World ; we must be sure to purge out all those *low* and *rigid* Notions of God, that represent him any ways unlovely to us.

2. Hence I infer, how miserably those Men are mistaken, that make any Thing a Sign of their Love to God, but what tends to their keeping his Commandments. There are *too* many Persons that are apt to measure their Affection to God and Christ, by the mere Impressions of *sensitive* Passion; because upon some *moving* and *affecting* Representations of those *amiable* Objects, they feel in themselves the same *sensitive* Emotions, as they are wont to do when they fall in Love with other Things; that is, if they feel their Spirits *soothing* and *ravishing* their Hearts, and their Hearts *diffusing* and *opening* themselves to let in those *soft* and *amorous* Spirits; they conclude themselves presently infinitely in love with God, and with their *Saviour*: Whereas many times all this is merely the Effect of an *amorous* Complexion, tinged and inflamed with *Religious Idea's*, and is commonly as remote from the Vertue of Love, as Light is from Darkness, or *Heaven* from *Hell*. For as there are many Men who are sincerely good, that cannot raise their *sensitive* Passions in their *Religious Exercises*; that are heartily sorry for their Sins, and yet cannot weep for them; and do entirely love God, and delight in his Service, and yet cannot move their Blood and Spirits into the *ravishing* Passions of *sensitive* Love and Joy: So on the other hand, there are many *gross* Hypocrites, that have not one Dram of *true* Piety in them, who yet in their *Religious Exercises* can put themselves into *wondrous* Transports of *bodily* Passion; who can pour out their Confessions in Floods of Tears, and cause their Hearts to *dilate* into Raptures of *sensitive* Love, and their Spirits to *tickle* them into Extasies of Joy. Which is purely to be resolved into the *different* Tempers of Mens Bodies; *some* Tempers being naturally *calm* and *sedate*, as that they are scarce capable of being disturbed into a Passion; *others* again so *soft* and *tender*, and *impressible*, that the most *frivolous* Fancy is able to raise a Commotion in them. And hence we see, that some People can weep most heartily at the Misfortunes of Lovers in *Plays* and *Romances*; and as heartily rejoyce at their *good* Successes, though they know, that both are but Fictions and mere *Idea's* of Fancy; whereas *others* can scarce shed a Tear, or raise a *sensitive* Joy at the *real* Calamities or Prosperities of a Friend, whom yet they love a great deal better than others can be supposed to do their feigned and *Romantick* Hero's. And yet because of these *sensitive* Transports which Men do sometimes feel in themselves, when their Fancies have been chased a while with a *pathetical* Description of God, they presently vote themselves his Friends and Lovers: Whereas in Truth, that which commonly moves their Affection, is not any thing real, either in God or in Christ; but some *sensual* Beauty attributed to them in *fanciful* Descriptions, that smites their *carnalized* Fancies. For generally, we find, that it is a *Metaphorical* God and Christ that such Men fall in love with; they set up an *Idol* of God and Christ in their Fancies, and dress it in such *carnal* *Metaphors* and *Allusions*, as their *sensual* Minds are most apt to be taken with; and then imagine that it smiles on them, and kisses and caresses them, with all the *pretty* Endearments of a *doating* Lover: Whereupon they grow so extremely fond of it, that they are not able to forbear hugging and dandling it: But alas, poor Men! they hug the *Cloud*, instead of the *Goddeffs*; and while they think they have God and Christ in their Arms, embrace nothing but a Spectre of their *own* Fancies: For let but any *other* Person, though it were only the *Hero* of a *Romance*, or the *Lover* of a *Play*, be but described to them in the same Language, and the same *glistering* Allusions, and they shall experience in themselves the same Passion for them, as they have for their God and their *Saviour*. Thus in the *Roman Nunneries* and *Monasteries*, we generally find the *Monks* fall in Love with the *Virgin Mary*, whilst the *Nuns* are all enamoured with *Jesus Christ*; that is, they chuse the *Objects* of their Love according to the *different* Inclinations of their Sexes; and the Reason why they chuse so differently, is no other than this, that they both frame to themselves such *different carnal* *Idea's* of the *different* Objects of their Love, as are most suitable and agreeable to their *carnal* Inclinations; but very commonly neither the *Monk* loves the *Virgin Mary*, nor the *Nun*, *Jesus Christ*; but they both merely doat upon the *different* Images of their own Fancies; which do not at all represent

sent those *divine* Beauties for which those *sacred* Persons do well deserve to be beloved. And thus it is *too* commonly among our selves, when yet we pretend to be *zealous* Lovers of God. Wherefore unless we have a Mind to deceive our selves, let us no longer depend on such *fallacious* Evidences as these; but let us try our Love of God by his own Touch-stone; and that is our Obedience to his *heavenly* Will. *If any Man love me, saith our Saviour, he will keep my Words,* Joh. 14. 23. and *ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you:* For this, saith St. John, is Love, that ye walk after his Commandments, Eph. 2. 6. For the Love of God and of Christ being a *rational* Love, is only to be valued by those *rational* Effects it produces in us: If it transform us into the Image of God, and makes us love what he loves, and hate what he hates; these are much more certain Indications of our Love to him, than the most *ravishing* Effects of *sensitive* Passion. For though our Hearts are melted into a Transport and Fondness to him; yet so long as our Hearts and our Practices are incomplicant to his Will and Laws, he will look upon us, and deal with us as Hypocrites and Enemies; and esteem all our *sensitive* Fondnesses towards him, but as the *base* Flatteries of Judas; who kissed him, and then betrayed him.

3. Hence I infer, what the *great* Reason is, why God doth so strictly enjoin us to love him. For there is no Command whatsoever so often repeated in Scripture, as this of loving God; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul: What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to love him? O love the Lord, all ye his Saints! Take heed therefore to your selves, that ye love the Lord your God.* These, and a World of other reiterated Injunctions of Love, do we meet with, in the *Sacred* Pages. But how comes this to pass? Doth God need our Love, that he so importunately calls for it? Or doth it contribute any thing to his Happiness, to see himself beloved of all his *great* World of Beings, which he hath made, and which he hath endued with the Capacity of loving him? No, no; though doubtless, the *best* Thing we can give him, is our Love; yet he is *too* happy in himself to need any thing of ours: For he is a *bottomless* Fountain of Happiness, circumscribing all those Blissess that he can need or desire, within the *boundless* Circle of his own Being. Or doth he court our Love merely that he may glory in the Numbers of his Lovers, and pride himself in those *infinite* Flames that concenter in him? No, nor this neither: For he is so infinitely *glorious* in himself, that no Act of ours can either add to, or subtract from his Glory; which amidst all the *Hallelujah's* of *Angels* and *Saints*, and all the *Blasphemies* of *Men* and *Devils*, shines with the same *unvaried* Splendour and Brightness; and is neither diminished by our Hatred, nor improved by our Love. Well then, if neither of these be the Reason, what is it? 'Tis true, the Thing is infinitely *reasonable* in it self, That he who is so lovely in himself, should be beloved; and that all our Affections should be *united* in him, who is the Fountain of all our *Beings* and *Well-Beings*: And God, who is the Author of our *reasonable* Faculties, cannot but desire, that we should act reasonably, and love that *best*, which best deserves to be beloved. But is there not some *particular* End for which God doth so earnestly crave and exact our Love? Yes, doubtless, there is; and such as is every way worthy of him that hath proposed it. For it cannot be supposed, that a Being infinitely *wise*, should ever act without End or Aim; but God being infinitely *happy*, cannot be supposed to propose any End for his own Advantage; because that would imply, that he wants or desires some Good that he hath not; and consequently, that he is not happy. But then he being infinitely *good*, as well as *happy*, we cannot imagine what *other* End he should have of his Actions, but only to do *good* to his Creatures, and promote their Happiness; and consequently, the End and Reason for which he doth so importunately demand our Love, is not to add any thing to himself, but to do *good* to us; for our *Goodness* extendeth not to God; as the Psalmist tells us, 16. 2. And though the Love of God be a very *great* Perfection to our Natures, yet Job tells us, that it is no Gain at all to God, that we keep our Ways perfect, Job 22. 3. But though it is none to God, yet it is an *infinite* Gain to our selves; and that is the

End and Reason for which he requires it : For, as I have already shew'd you, of all the Principles of our Obedience to God, Love is the most *pregnant* and *fruitful*. Now God requires *us* to obey him for *our own* Good, he having enjoyned *us* nothing, but what tends to the Perfection and Happiness of our Natures ; and he requires *us* to love him, that so we may the more entirely and perfectly obey him ; and thereby more speedily arrive to that Happiness for which his *infinite* Goodness hath designed *us*. So that all the Profit, both of our Love and Obedience, accrues to our selves ; 'tis we only that reap the Fruit of *our own* Vertues ; we only that are exalted by those *Homages* that we render to our *Maker* : For he is as *happy* without our Love, as he is with it ; and all those *united* Flames of *Angels* and *Saints* that meet and concenter in him, add not one Spark to the *infinite* Element of his Happiness ; which were not *infinite*, could it admit of Increase : But the Lovers themselves are *glorified* by their Love ; and because they are so, God requires and exacts it. For our Love being the great Soul of our Obedience ; and our Obedience the *necessary* Means of our Happiness, the Profit of both must necessarily redound to our selves : And 'tis we only that must be enriched and glorified by them. For this Reason therefore God requires our Love, that it may be a living Principle of Obedience ; and that being so, it might accelerate our Happiness : For he whose Love of God is but arrived to the Degree of a reigning Principle of Obedience, so as that his Obedience proceeds more from his Love than from any other Passion ; doth already border on the *heavenly* State, and is within the Confines of Perfection. For as for the *Inhabitants* of *Heaven*, they are all acted by *pure* Love, which makes their Obedience *pure* and *perfect* : They see God Face to Face ; and by their Sight, are all inflamed with Love to him ; and by their Love, are winged with *everlasting* Vigour and Readiness to serve him ; and all their Aversations to his *Heavenly* Will being swallowed up in perfect Love, they not only obey without Murmuring, but with *infinite* Ravishment and Pleasure ; and never feel themselves more in *Heaven*, than while they are serving, praising, and adoring, him. This is the *happy* State of those *heavenly* Lovers ; and to this we are approaching with *full* Speed, while we obey from a Principle of Love : For Love will carry us on with Wind and Tide, from *one* Degree of Perfection to *another* ; and whilst *poor slavish* Souls that are acted mainly by their Fears, are feign to tug at the Oar, and yet creep on but slowly, and by *insensible* Degrees ; we shall run forwards with Ease and Speed ; and get more Ground at one Stroak, than they can in twenty. For in *one* good Action performed out of Love, there is more Vertue and Goodness, than in a *hundred* of those whereunto we are dragged by our own Fears and Terrors ; because as the Degrees of *Evil*, so the Degrees of *Good* in all Actions, are to be measured by the Degrees of Will that are in them ; and doubtless, in those good Actions, that have Love for their Principle, there is much more of Will than in those that proceed from Fear and Terror ; and consequently, our Nature being perfected by good Actions, and *more or less* perfected by them, the *more or less* of Goodness they have in them, must needs be much more perfected by the good Actions of Love, than by those of Fear. Whilst therefore we are acted in *Religion* by the Love of God, our Souls are upon the Wing to Perfection, and in a *swift* Tendency to the *heavenly* State ; we are already in the Neighbourhood of *glorified* Saints and Angels ; and if we continue our Course, shall soon be fit for their Society and Converse. This therefore is the *great* End and Reason why God doth so importunately claim our Love ; because this, of all others, is the most *perfective* Principle of our Natures, and consequently, the most *conducive* to our Happiness.

4. And Lastly, From hence I infer, of what *vast* Importance it is to us in *Religion* to love God. For you plainly see, that Love is not only a Principle of Obedience ; but that of all others, it is the most *efficacious* and *operative* ; that it doth not only engage us to keep God's Commandments, but that it enables us to keep them most universally, and vigorously, and chearfully, and constantly. So that what the *Apostle* saith of *Brotherly Love*, is more universally true of the Love

Love of God, *that is the keeping of the whole Law*, Rom. 12. 10. that is, casually and virtually it is. For so Love is the *universal Cause* which within its *fruitful Womb* contains all the Particulars of our Obedience, and is naturally productive of them all; So that virtually, it is *all Religion*; it is *Godliness*, and *Temperance*, and *Charity*, and *Humility*, and *Righteousness*, and *Patience*; being the *common Cause* and Parent of them all. For Love hath an *universal Respect* to the Will of the Beloved; it doth not *chuse* what is *easy*, and *refuse* what is *hard*; but likes what God likes, and disapproves of what he hates; his Will being the *great Reason* of all its Choices and Refusals: And whatsoever Things in particular, are *disastful* and *difficult* to us, by its powerful Oratory it renders *pleasant* and *easy*. For he that serves God out of Love, serves him with Delight; and he that serves him with Delight, hath no Clog to incumber him; none of those *Aversations* and *Antipathies* to his Service, that do so load and depress *unwilling Minds*; he doth not row against the Current of Nature; but acts with the *full Inclination* of his Mind, and so feels little or nothing of Drudgery in his *Religion*; and being carried on with a *full Tide* of Delight, he goes easily and chearfully down with the Stream. Of such *vast Importance* is the Love of God to our *Religion*, that it not only produces it; but renders it *easy* and *pleasant*: So that without some Degree of *this*, our Religion can have neither Being nor Well-being; and it is as possible for *us* to live without a Soul, and to be nourished without Food, as it is for our Religion to *be*, and to thrive without the Love of God.

Wherefore, if ever we would be *Religious* indeed, if ever we would *connaturalize Religion* to our Souls, so as to render it *easy* and *delightful* to *us*; let *us* endeavour to kindle this *heavenly Fire* within *us*: And certainly, if we heartily endeavour it, we cannot fail of Success. For there are so many *mighty Reasons* to engage *us* to the Love of God, so many *invincible Attractions* in his Nature, and in his Love towards *us*, as cannot but affect *us*, if we seriously ponder and consider them. For how can I reflect upon that *amiable Nature* of his, in which there is an *harmonious Concurrence* of all Beauties and Perfections; where *Wisdom* and *Goodness*, *Justice* and *Mercy*, and every *lovely Thing* that can claim or deserve a *rational Affection*, are contempered together in their utmost Degrees of Perfection? How, I say, can I steadily reflect upon such a Nature as this, without being charmed and captivated with the Love of it? How can I think of that *stupendous Love* which he hath expressed towards me, in giving me my Being, and all the Blessings I enjoy; in preparing a *Heaven of immortal Joys* for me, and sending his *Son* from thence to conduct me thither, without being all inflamed with Love to him? Wherefore, let *us* seriously set our selves to the Contemplation of God, of the Loveliness of his Nature, and of his *infinite Kindness* to *us* and all his Creation. Let *us* repeat the Thoughts of these Things upon our Minds; and never give over pressing our selves with those *infinite Reasons* we have to love him, till we feel the *heavenly Fire* begin to kindle within our Breasts; and then let *us* never give over feeding, and blowing it with these *divine Considerations*, till it rise up into a *triumphant Flame*. And then we shall feel our selves animated with a new Soul, and inspired with so much Life and Activity in *Religion*, as that from our Experience we shall be able to subscribe to the Truth of the Text; *This is the Love of God*, this the most *natural Expression* and *inseparable Effect* of it, *That we keep his Commandments*.

DISCOURSE XIII.

UPON

I JOHN v. 3.

----- *And his Commandments are not grievous.*

I Proceed now to the next Part of the Text, viz. the *Motive* by which this *obedient Love* of God is enforced; and *his Commandments are not grievous*: *ἐν εἰσὶν βαρεῖαι*, they are not *heavy*, or *burthensome*; they have no such Weight or Difficulty in them, as ought in Reason to discourage us from keeping them. For in these Words the *Apostle* seems to *anticipate* an Objection: Alas, if this be the Love of God, to keep his Commandments, what Man is able to love him? For if his Commandments are not absolutely *impossible*; yet are they at least, so extremely *difficult*, that scarce any Man can have the Courage to undertake the Performance of them. This, saith our *Apostle*, is a *migbty* Mistake, or a *wretched* Pretence for Mens Sloth and Idleness: For verily and truly, the Commands of God have no such Difficulty in them; but are in themselves very *gentle* and *easy* to be born. And with this Assertion our *blest Saviour* doth most perfectly accord, *Mat. 11. 30. My Yoke is easy, and my Burthen is light.* And the Prophet *David* makes it not only *easy*, but *delightful*, *Psal 119. 18. The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Heart; the Commandments of the Lord are pure, enlightning the Eyes.* And then in the 10th Verse he tells us, that they are more to be desired than Gold, yea, than much fine Gold; and sweeter than Honey, or the Honey-comb. So far are they from being Toils and Burthens, that in Reality they are Pleasures and Recreations. But farther to demonstrate this Truth to you, That God's Commands are not *burthensome* and *difficult*, I shall do these two things:

I. Shew you that they are *facile* and *easy* in themselves.

II. That *Christ*, by what he hath done, hath render'd them much more *facile*, than they are in themselves.

I. That the Commands of God are *facile* and *easy* in themselves: And this will evidently appear if we consider,

1. That whatsoever they enjoyn, hath some *natural Good* appendent to it.
2. That every Thing which they enjoyn, is highly *agreeable* to our *reasonable* Natures.
3. That They are all *perfective* of our Natures, and *conducive* to our Happiness.
4. That in themselves they are *plain*, and *simple*, and *direct*, and have no Intricacies or Labyrinths in them.
5. That they are all so inseparably connected to one another, that they mutually promote and help forwards each other.

I. That

1. That whatsoever they enjoyn, hath some *natural Good* inseparably appendent to it, to sweeten and endear it. The *great and wise First Mover* hath so ordered Things in the Course of Motion, which he hath established, that *such and such* Actions should be ordinarily attended with *such and such* Effects and Consequents; and this is one *great Way* by which he hath signified to the World his Dislike or Approbation of *Human Actions* by the Effects and Consequents which he hath chained and annexed to them. If in the Course of Things which he hath established, *such an Action* be ordinarily attended with a *good Effect*, he thereby signifies his Approbation of it, and declares that it is his Will and Pleasure that we should do, and persevere in doing it: But if the Consequents, which in the Course of Nature, are ordinarily linked to such an Action, are *evil and hurtful*, he thereby declares his Dislike and Abhorrence of it; and that it is his Will and Pleasure that we should carefully and constantly avoid it. For the *great Author* of our Beings hath so framed our Natures, and placed us in such Circumstances and Relations, that there is nothing *vicious*, but is also *injurious* to us; nothing *vertuous*, but is *advantageous*; and in this the *Good and Evil* of all *Human Vertues and Vices* do consist; and 'tis purely for this Reason, why he forbids the *one*, and commands the *other*; because he is our Friend, and would not have us neglect any Thing that tends to our *Good*, nor do any Thing that is *hurtful and injurious* to us; and because he knows, that while we are thus framed, and do continue in these Circumstances and Relations, it is impossible but *Vertue* should be an Advantage, and *Vice* a Mischief to our Natures. And indeed, the *great Sanction* of the *Law of Nature*, is nothing else but that *natural Good and Evil* which is ordinarily consequent to the Actions which it commands and forbids. For when *God* hath no otherwise revealed himself to the World, than only by the *established Course and Nature of Things*, that was the only *Bible* whereby Mankind could be instructed in his Will and Pleasure; and there being no *Threats* or *Promises* antecedently annexed unto *bad and good Actions*, his Will and Pleasure concerning our doing or avoiding them, was only *visible* in those *good or bad Effects and Consequents*, which in the Course of Nature he hath made necessary to them. And indeed, the *Moral Good and Evil* of all Actions, is finally to be resolved into the *natural Good and Evil* that is appendent to them; For therefore our Actions are *morally good*, because they are *naturally beneficial* to us; and therefore are they *morally Evil*, because they are *naturally prejudicial and hurtful*: And those that are neither of these, are indifferent Actions; and stand in the middle between *Good and Evil*. And indeed, this Distinction of Actions by their Effects and Consequents, is in most Particulars so *plain and sensible*, that all the World hath taken Notice of it: For whereas all *good Actions* have an *apparent Tendency*, either to the *Publick Good*, wherein our own *Private* is involved, or to our own *animal and sensitive Good*, our *Quiet, and Health, and Reputation, and Prosperity*; or to the Perfection of our *rational Natures*, and the *sovereign Pleasure and Happiness* of our Minds; all *bad Actions* tend directly contrary, either to the *Damage and Ruin* of the *Publick-Weal*, or to the *Hurt and Prejudice* of our *animal and sensitive Felicity*; to the *diseasing* of our Bodies, the *staining* our Names, or the *impoverishing* our Estates; or to the *defacing and blemishing* the Beauty of our *rational Natures*, and the Interruption and Disturbance of all the Pleasures and Felicities of our Minds. And this Distinction of *good and evil Actions*, is so immutably fixed in the Nature of Things, that it can never be obliterated, until *God* wholly alters the Course of his Creation, and impresses quite contrary Laws of Motion on it. For so long as we continue what we are, in the same Nature and Circumstances, and Relations to *God* and one another, *Righteousness and Godliness, Humility and universal Love*, must necessarily be *good* for us; and their Contraries *bad and destructive* to our Happiness.

Now, this *wise* and *excellent* Constitution of Things doth very much tend to the facilitating of *Vertue* and *Goodness* to us. For when Things are so constituted, that it is become our Interest, as well as our Duty to pursue *Vertue*, and eschew *Vice*; when that which distinguishes our Duty from our Sin, is the *Good* that it doth us, and the *apparent* Tendency it hath to our Happiness; this, if we love our selves, must needs endear and recommend it to us: For now we serve our selves in serving our Maker; the Substance of all whose Injunctions, is no more than this, that we should pursue *our own* Happiness, by doing all those Things which are necessary thereunto. I confess, had he made those Actions which are our Sins, to be our Duty, we had then some Reason to complain: For then we should have been bound in *pure* Obedience to God, to damnify our selves; and, like the *wretched Priests of Baal*, to cut and slash *our own* Bodies and Souls, merely to humour and gratify the *Divinity* whom we adore; then in obeying him, we must have acted *our own* Tragedy, and made our selves *miserable* in *pure* Loyalty to our Maker. For there is such an *inseparable* Bane clings to all *vicious* Actions, as necessarily renders them *destructive* and *venomous*: And we may as soon clip off the Sun beams with a Pair of Scissers, as separate Vice from its *mischievous* Consequences. But now, when the Sum of all that God requires of us, is to be *good* to our selves, and Friends to *our own* Happiness; to do what is *beneficial*, and avoid what is *hurtful* to us; when every Command of his is an Instance of his Love to us, and exacts nothing of us, but what we would have done of *our own* Accord, had we but known what is *good* for us, as well as he, and loved our selves as well as he loves us: In a word, when at the End of every *good* Action there stands some natural Good beckening and inviting us to it; and at the End of every *bad* One, some natural Evil to warn and affright us from coming at it; so that we cannot run from any Duty into any Sin, without leaving a Benefit for a Mischief, and leaping out of some Degree of Happiness, into some Degree of Misery: When things, I say, are thus, as it is apparent they are, with what Conscience can we complain that our Duty is *burthensome* and *uneasie*? This therefore is one *great* Reason why God's Commands cannot be *grievous*; because they require nothing but what is *beneficial*, and forbid nothing but what is *hurtful* and *injurious* to us. And sure, no Man can have reason to complain, that is forbid Poyson, and commanded to eat nothing but what is *wholsome* and *nourishing*.

2. Another Thing that facilitates the Commands of God, is this, That they are highly *agreeable* to our *reasonable* Natures. And hence the Apostle calls the whole of our *Religion* a *reasonable Service*, Rom. 12. 1. And for the Truth of this, I dare appeal to any considering Man in the World, whether those *Vertues* which God hath enjoyned, be not in their own Nature, far more *reasonable*, than any of the Contrary Vices; whether (supposing there be a God that made and governs the World; and from whom we derive our Beings, and all the Blessings we enjoy or expect) it be not much more *reasonable* in the Nature of the Thing, that we should *worship*, and *revere*, and *love*, and *honour*, and *obey* him; than that we should *neglect*, and *despise*, *blaspheme* and *rebel* against him; or whether we can behave our selves so unworthily to One that hath deserved so well at our hands, without doing the *greatest* Violence to our own Reason; whether since we are all of us *reasonable* Beings, and our Reason is the *noblest* Ingredient of our Natures, it doth not much better become us to subject our *blind* Passions and Appetites, to those *eternal* Rules of Temperance which Right Reason prescribes, than to let loose the Reins to them, and suffer them to run headlong into all Excesses and Riots; whether, since we are incorporated into the *great* Society of Mankind, it be not much more *conducive* to the Good of the whole, to behave our selves *justly* and *honestly*, *charitably* and *obliging* one towards another, than to *defraud* and *oppress*, *malign* and *persecute* one another. I dare appeal to any Man, that hath ever thought twice of these Matters, whether in point of Reasonableness the Advantage is not wholly on the side of Vertue; yea, and whether the *opposite* Vices, compared with these Vertues, seem not as *extravagant*, as the *wildest* Freaks of

of a *Mad-man* compared with the *wise* Managements of a *Minister of State*. But I need not appeal to *particular* Men in this Matter, since all the *reasonable* World is agreed in the Point, and the Men of all Ages and Nations, and Religions, how much soever in other Points they have dissented from *one another*, yet in this have still been *unanimous*, That *Vertue* is the *wisest* and most *reasonable* Thing in the World, and *Vice* the most *absurd* and *irrational*; and this not only in the *general*, but in all those *particular* Instances of *Vertue* and *Vice* which *Christianity* commands and forbids. For excepting the two *Sacraments*, and believing in *Jesus Christ*, and the Observation of the *Lord's Day*, which are the *instituted* Means of our *Religion*, there is nothing made Matter of Duty to us, but what all the *wise* World hath long before pronounced most highly *fit* and *reasonable*.

This therefore, must needs render the Commands of God very *easy* to us, that they do so perfectly agree with our *reasonable* Natures, and require nothing of us either to be done or avoided, but what the Reason of every *wise* Man would have obliged him to, whether God had commanded it or no. So that now to *facilitate* our Duty, we have the *full* Concurrence of our Reason; which, upon *due* and *impartial* Consideration, cannot but approve and recommend it to us, as the most *reasonable* Thing in the World; and if it be so, how is it possible that it should be in its *own* Nature *grievous*? Is it so *hard* a Matter for Men to act like Men, and not to live their own Reverse and *Antipodes*? Is it such a *mighty* Burthen, to comply with the most *genuine* Inclinations of our Nature; and to swim with the *full* Tide and Current of our Reason, in obeying those Commands, which are so far from offering any Violence to our Faculties, that they have their *full* Consent and Approbation? Let Men say and teach what they please; 'tis as apparent as the Sun, that the Difficulties of *Religion* commence not so much upon the Stock of Nature, as of Education, and *evil* Habits and Customs: For in all *other* Instances, that which is *natural*, is always *facile* and *easy*; and if Reason be the Nature of a Man, *Religion* must be either *natural* or *unreasonable*. So that *Religion* disagrees with us upon no *other* Account, but only because we disagree with our selves; and it just so far crosses us, as we do the Current of our *own rational* Natures. We have *sophisticated* our Natures with the Intermixtures of *sensual* and *devilish* Habits; and they are these, that the Commands of God do aggrieve: And so 'tis not the Man that is so burthened with *Religion*; but 'tis either the *Beast*, or the *Devil* that is in him.

3. Another thing that facilitates God's Commands, is this; That they are mightily *furthered* and *promoted* by all the *natural* Instincts and Passions of *Human* Nature. There are certain Propensions in *Human* Nature, antecedent to all Reason and Discourse; that seem to be implanted in us by the *wise* Author of our Beings, for no *other* End, but only to minister to *Vertue* and *Religion*; such in particular, are *Self-love*, the *Love of Truth*, and of *Pleasure*, *Commiseration* and *Gratitude*, and *Affectation of Praise*; all which do discover themselves in us in our *early* Infancy, before we are capable of discoursing our selves into them. For even in *young* Infants you may observe a great Inclination to defend themselves, and to repel Injuries, which proceeds from the Principle of *Self-love* that is in them, a *vehement* Desire of what seems *good* to them, and a *great* Displeasure when they perceive themselves deceived; the *latter* of which must proceed from their Love of Truth, as the *former* from their Love of Goodness. Again, when they see a *miserable* Object, or one whom they think so, they presently bemoan it, and express by their Actions a very *earnest* Desire to defend and relieve it; which proceeds from that *natural* Commiseration that is in them. Again, as soon as they are able to distinguish Faces and Persons, we see, they express the *greatest* Love and Fondness to those that tend, and feed them, and do them most good; which is a *plain* Expression of their *natural* Gratitude. And as soon as they understand the Meaning of *Words* and *Actions*, they shew themselves highly pleased, when they are *commended* and *applauded*; and much grieved and ashamed, when they are *derided* and *exposed*: Which plainly discovers their *natural* Affectation of Praise. These, and such like Instincts and Propensions, there are found in *Hu-*

man Nature ; which being well managed, and improved by our Reason, prove excellent Instruments of *Vertue* and *Religion* ; and do very much facilitate and further our Practice of them. For this our *natural* Self love being guided by our Reason, doth strongly incline us to serve and obey God ; who being the most powerful Agent in the World, can do us the *greatest* Good, if we please him ; and the *greatest* Hurt, if we affront and provoke him : So that as we love our selves, it concerns us to use all reasonable Ways to endear and reconcile our selves to him. Thus our *natural* Desire of God, if conducted by our Reason, will incline us to do the best Actions ; since from these the *greatest* Good will necessarily redound to us ; and our Love of Truth, by good Management, may be easily improved into Honesty and Sincerity, and an *universal* Abhorrence of Vice, upon the Account of those *notorious* Cheats and Impostors that are in it. Thus also by the Bias of our *natural* Commiseration, we are strongly inclined to *Charity*, and *Beneficence*, and *universal Love* ; and by its own *innate* Gratitude, our Nature is propense to the Love of God, who is our *Sovereign* Benefactor ; to honour and obey our Parents, and do all the Acts and Offices of a *noble* and *generous* Friendship. And to name no more, thus by our *natural* Affectation of Praise, we are strongly inclined to do *praise worthy* Things ; and consequently, to exercise our selves in all those *amiable* Vertues, which by *common* Consent, are lookt upon as Graces and Ornaments of *Human* Nature. Thus, by all those Instincts that God hath implanted in our Natures, we are inclined to Vertue, and Obedience to his Will : And for this Reason chiefly, hath he implanted them in us ; because they are excellent Instruments of *Religion*, having in them such a *natural* Aptitude and Proneness to facilitate our Duty, by inclining us to it, and to farther us in Holiness and Vertue. I confess, there are none of these Instincts but may be improved into Vices ; nor is there any Thing so good, but what may be perverted to very *bad* Purposes : And if Men will abuse themselves, and willfully debase the Instincts of their Nature, there is no Remedy for their Folly ; and they must thank themselves when they feel the *dismal* Effects of it. But this, I think, is plain, that there are no Propensions in *Human* Nature, but what are much more improveable into Vertue, than into Vice ; and if Men will but use themselves well, and as it becomes reasonable Creatures to do, they would doubtless, find themselves very much farthered in their Duty by the *natural* Instincts which God hath implanted within them. And this is a *mighty* Advantage on Vertue's side, that it is thus aided and assisted with all the Instincts of our Natures ; which, like *obedient* Handmaids, are most readily inclined to execute its Commands, and minister to its Pleasure and Interest. How then is it possible, that Religion in it self should be *burthensome* and *grievous* to us, when the Propensions of our Nature do so fairly comply with it, and is helped forwards and promoted by all their *united* Force and Influence ? 'Tis difficult indeed, for a Man to go against the Grain ; but to act according to Nature, to follow *our own* Propensions, and to do what we are inclined to by *natural* Instinct, is doubtless, the *easiest* Thing in the World.

4. Another Thing that makes those Vertues which God commands, to be easy, is this, that they are all so inseparably connected to one another, that they mutually promote and help each other : For all the Vertues are so mutually concatenated, that the stirring of any one Link, moves the whole Chain. Thus, for Instance, the *true* Knowledge of God naturally inflames the Soul with the Love of him ; and then the Love of him insensibly transforms her into the Image of his *beloved* Goodness : For he that loves God, must needs be enamoured with that *divine* Goodness which is the Root of his Love : And while he is ravished with the Sweetness of his Good Will, the Undeservedness of his Grace, and the Clemency of his Pardon ; an *heavenly* Spirit steals into his Soul ; and he loves and becomes like God, so both at once, that like a Wedg of Steel, he is transformed into the Likeness of the Fire that heats him ; and is all inflamed and inlightned at the same Moment. And as he burns with Love, so he resembles the Goodness that set him on Fire, and becomes *pure* as that is *pure*, and *holy* as that is *holy*, and *just* and *merciful* as that *heavenly* Original is, which he copies and tran.

transcribes. Thus, wheresoever the Love of God is, it hath all the *godlike* Vertues attending it; and that being the *first* Link in the *heavenly* Chain, whensoever it moves, it communicates Motion to all the rest. For he that heartily loves God, will love those whom God loves; and so the Love of God will draw *Brotherly-Charity* after it; and he who loves those whom God loves, will be *just* and *righteous* in his Dealings and Deportment towards them; and so *Brotherly-Charity* will draw *Righteousness* after it: And he that demeans himself justly and righteously towards others, will neither undervalue them, nor overvalue himself; and so *Righteousness* will draw *Humility* after it: And he that doth not overvalue himself, is fairly disposed to be sober in all his Passions; and so *Humility* draws *Temperance*, and *Sobriety*, and *Meekness* after it. Thus one *Vertue* smootheneth the Way to another, and makes it not only possible, but *easy*: For there is such a *near* Neighbourhood between these *heavenly* Sisters, that when we are arrived at one, we pass insensibly to the next; and so on by Degrees, till we are gone round with them all. For though there be not an immediate Dependence of every *Vertue* upon every one *Vertue*, so as to make it necessary for a Man to have all Vertues in every Moment that he hath one, (for a Man may be *charitable*, and yet not presently *humble*; as he may be *just*, and yet not immediately *temperate*;) Yet there is not so *near* a Dependence between them, that one always disposes the Mind for another; This *Vertue* always makes way for its next Neighbour, and that for its next, and so on all around the Circle of Vertues. Thus, *Humility* naturally disposes the Mind to *Meekness*, *Meekness* to *Charity*, *Charity* to *Justice*, *Justice* to *Devotion*, (which is giving God his Due) and *Devotion* to *Heavenly mindedness* and *Contempt* of the World; and so all along there is a *gentle* and *easy* Transition from one to another. Now this must needs mightily facilitate the *Vertues* of Religion, that they are so nearly confederated to each other, and so do naturally contribute to each other's Assistance. For whereas, if it were not for this, there would be still the same Difficulty in practising the *second* *Vertue*, as there is in practising the *first*, and in practising the *third*, as there is in practising the *second*, and so every single *Vertue* would be equally difficult; now the main Difficulty lies in the first we began with: For by practising of that, we shall be so well disposed for the next, that afterwards we shall go on with much more Ease and Pleasure: For the *first* *Vertue* being set a-going, like the *First moving Heaven*, will communicate its Motion from *Orb* to *Orb*, from one *Vertue* to another, till the whole *Sphere* whirls round in an *harmonious* Order. Thus all the *Vertues*, you see, do naturally lighten and ease one another, and every one contributes something to make every one more *easy*: So that had we but the Courage to begin to practise them, we should find, they would every Day grow more *easy* and *easy* to us; and that, not only because we should be more and more Habituated to them; but because they being mutually ally'd to one another, the stronger they grow, the more vigorously they must farther and promote each other.

5. And Lastly, Another Thing that makes the Vertues that God hath commanded us, *easy*, is this, that in themselves they are *plain*, and *simple*, and *direct*, and have no Intricacies or *Labyrinths* in them. As for Sin and Wickedness, it is an *inextricable* Labyrinth, in which the further a Man goes, the more he will perplex and lose himself; it is a *boundless* Wilderness, whose Paths do all thwart and cross one another. For all Vices consist in Extreams, and are either the *Excesses* or *Defects* of *Vertue*; so that there are two Vices to one *Vertue*, and both are Extreams thwarting and running counter to one another. Now amidst this great Diversity and Contrariety of Vices, the Sinner must needs be extremely amazed and distracted: For his Lusts are so *infinite*, that he can see no End of them: they do so cross and interfere with each other, that while he humours one, he displeases another. For in gratifying his *Sordidness*, he affronts his *Pride*; and in feeding his *Covetousness*, starves his *Sensuality*; so that his wretched Soul wanders among infinite Cross-ways, and is miserably distracted by its own contrary Desires, which like *Acleon's Hounds*, are continually worrying and tearing her in pieces. But

all the Paths of *Vertue* lie strait forwards between the *vicious* Extrems ; and like *Parallel Lines*, do never interfere with *one another* : They never raise any *contrary* Desires, nor distract our Minds with *inconsistent* Passions ; but all their Motions are *regular* and *uniform*, conspiring with, and promoting *one another*. For the Truth of it is, *Vertue* is all but one *intire* Thing, much like the Center of a Circle ; which though many Lines are drawn from it round about, and it is look'd upon, sometimes as the Term of *this* Line, and sometimes of *that* ; yet it is *one* Term to them all, and is in it self undivided : So is *Vertue* but one *intire* Perfection, though it seems to be diversified in regard of the many Affections that it moderates, and the several Actions which he doth produce : And though its Precepts and Actions are *many*, yet they are all ordained to *one* End ; and in that they are united, as well as in the Principle from whence they proceed. And upon this Account there can be none of those *perplexing* Intricacies in the Paths of *Vertue*, as are ordinarily found in the Ways of *Sin* ; because they are all of them *direct* and *strait*, leading from *one* Principle to *one* and the *same* End : And the Principle and End of our Motion being *one*, 'tis impossible but our Designs, Desires and Pursuits, should be *simple* and *uniform* ; and consequently, the whole Force of our Souls being bent *one* Way, we must needs proceed, with more Alacrity and Ease, than we can possibly do when 'tis divided and dispersed among so *great* a Multiplicity of Ends and Objects as *Vice* proposes to us. So that here is one *great* Advantage that *Vertue* hath above *Vice*, in respect of Easiness ; that whereas almost in every *bad* Action a Man hath a *different* End, now to satisfy *this* Lust, and anon the *contrary* ; in every *vertuous one*, his End is always the same : And whereas the *former* acts variously and inconsistently, and his Desires frequently clash and run a-tilt at *one another* ; the *latter* always moves directly and uniformly, by *one* and the *same* Rule, towards *one* and the *same* End. And whereas many *Vices* are in themselves full of Intanglements, *Vertue* is always *plain*, and *open*, and *free*. As for Instance, how do we perplex and intangle our selves by *Lying* and *Knavery*, consuming the Pleasure of our Lives within a *winding* Maze of *little* Tricks and *intricate* Contrivances ? And what *shameful* Retreats and *false* Colours ; what *Fucus's* and *Daubings*, are we feign to use, to avoid Contradiction and Discovery ? Whereas were we but *honest* and *sincere* in our Professions and Actions, our Way would be *open*, and *easy*, and *uniform* ; wherein we might pursue all our Ends by the *directest* Means, and need never wander about in the Labyrinths of a *mysterious* Subtily ; where we may walk without blushing, in the Sight of the Sun, and in the View of the World, and have no Occasion to skulk into Coverts and Retirements. And the same may be said of *Ambition*, and *Covetousness*, and *Pride*, and *wandering Lust*, Vices that are usually full of *great* Intreagues and Mysteries : Whereas the contrary Vertues are all *plain* and *simple*, and having nothing of Difficulty or Intricacy in them. This therefore is a *great* Advantage that *Vertue* hath in Respect of Ease, that it is *plain*, and *uniform*, and *simple* and *direct*. And so I have done with the *first* Thing proposed ; which was to shew you, that God's Commands in themselves are *facile* and *easy*. I now proceed

2. To the second Thing ; which is to prove, that our *blessed Saviour*, by what he hath done, hath rendred them much more *easy* than they are in themselves. Now there are these *Four* Things which our *Saviour* hath contributed to the *facilitating* the Commands of God.

1. The Assistance of his *Holy Spirit*.
2. The Influence of *his own* Example.
3. The *merciful* Indulgence and Condescension of his *Gospel* to the Weakness and Infirmary of our Natures.
4. The *glorious* Rewards he hath promised us upon our *sincere* Obedience.

1. To the rendring of God's *Commands easie*, he hath contributed the Assistance of his *Holy Spirit*. For he hath promised to give his *Holy Spirit* unto every one that *asks*: And therefore, though our Nature of it self, be extreamly *weak*, and not able of it self to stand under the *easie* Burthen of its Duty; if we will but struggle, and do what we are able, he is engaged by Promise, not to suffer us to sink. For if by doing what we can, it is in our Power to engage him to enable us to do what we cannot, it is certainly in our Power to do all: For though in our *own* Strength we cannot do all; yet if we please, it may be in our Power to do more than all, through him that will strengthen us, if we will but do what we can.

2. To the rendring of God's *Commands easie*, he hath also contributed the Influence of *his own* most Holy Example. For by *his own* most perfect Obedience to the Commands of his Father, he hath not only set us a Copy to write after; but he hath also given us most convincing Evidence that our Obedience is both *possible* and *honourable*. That it is *possible*, we see by what he hath done; and it is certain, that what hath been done, may be done: That it is *honourable*, we see by his doing of it; for certainly, so great a Person as the *Son of God*, would never have stooped to an *Inglorious* Obedience. So that the Example of our Saviour, not only encourages our Obedience, but crowns and dignifies it, and renders it a fit Object both of our Endeavour and Ambition: For by doing himself what he requires of us, he hath plainly demonstrated, not only that it may be done; but also that it highly becomes us to do it. Thus, the Glorious Example of our Saviour, whilst it directs our Obedience, doth at the same time excite and encourage it. For he conversed among Men with a modest Vertue, such as was suitable to an Ordinary Course of Life. His *Piety* was *even*, *constant* and *unblamable*; complying with Civil Society, and a Secular Conversation. It broke not forth into *high* Transports and *Seraphic* Expressions; but was such as was both fit and *easie* for Mortals to imitate. His Vertue consisted not in prodigious Fastings, or high Abstractions from Sense; but in a Life of Justice and Temperance, Humility, and Charity, and Patience; that is, in such a Life, as was not only proper, but *possible* for us to lead. And by this means he hath transmitted to us the more of an imitable Vertue: For he did not out-run the Capacities of Men, in prodigious Expressions of Sanctity and Vertue; but complied with our Weakness, and kept pace with our Strength; that so he might entertain us all along with the Comforts of his Company, and the Influences of a perpetual Guide. And as that Rule of Faith which he hath propounded to us, is fitted to our Understandings, being very short, *easie* and intelligible; so the Copy of Manners which he hath set before us, is not only fitted with Excellencies *worthy*, but also with Compliances *possible* to be imitated. And therefore how efficaciously must such a Glorious Example contribute to the facilitating the Commands of God to us; since it doth not only point us to our Duty; but also excite us to perform it; and that both by its Condescension to our Strength and Capacity; and by the plain Demonstration it gives, that our Duty is both Possible and Honourable.

3. To the rendring of God's *Commands easie* to us, our Saviour hath also contributed the Merciful Indulgence and Condescension of his Gospel, to the Weakness and Imperfection of our Natures: For in his Gospel he hath mercifully considered our State, that we are but *frail imperfect* Creatures, that are very prone to act inconsiderately, and to be ever and anon surprized in this great Hurry of Temptations; and therefore in his *Holy Gospel* he hath made Provision for us accordingly; that is, he hath proportioned our Burthen to our Strength, and taken the Measure of our Duty by our Capacities. For all that he hath required of us as the Condition of our *Eternal* Salvation, is only this; that we should honestly endeavour to understand what he commands and forbids us, and that we should not live in the *wilful* Neglect of any *known* Duty, or in the *wilful* Commission of any *known* Sin: And if we do this, he hath engaged himself to make such a *merciful* Abatement for our Infirmities, and Inadvertencies, and Follies,

lies, and Surprizes, that they shall never rise in Judgment against us, so as to exclude us from *eternal Happiness*. So that now there can be nothing our Duty, that is *naturally* impossible; nothing necessary to our *eternal Happiness*, that is *morally* impossible; that is, that can reasonably be expected from us, considering our State and Circumstances: And what is neither of these, cannot be supposed to be very *grievous* and *burthenfome*. For unless we account it hard, that we are not left at Liberty to be *obstinate Rebels* to our God and Saviour; and with an *audacious* Forehead to reject what they command, and pursue what they forbid; it is certain, there can be no such Thing as a Burthen or Grievance in our Religion.

4. And Lastly, To the rendring of God's Commands *easy* to us, our Saviour hath contributed the Promise of a *glorious* Reward, upon condition of our sincere Obedience. And this is such a vast Contribution to the Ease of our Duty, as is sufficient to turn it all into *Jubilee* and Recreation. For when I seriously consider, that after I have spent a few Moments here in the Noble Exercises of a sincere *Piety* and *Virtue*, I shall be translated into a Region of *immortal* Pleasures; where in the Society of my God and Saviour, of Angels and blessed Spirits, I shall spend an Eternity in one *continued uninterrupted Act* of *rapturous* Love, and joy, and Pleasure; where, in a *perfect* Freedom from all the Arrogancies of Flesh and Blood, and from all the Vexations of an ill-natur'd World, I shall live as happily for ever, as all the Joys of Heaven can make me: In a word, where I shall have nothing else to do, but to converse with the most *happy Lovers*; and to bear a part in that ravishing Consort of *Praises* and *Hallelujahs*, wherewith they laud and celebrate the Fountain of their Happiness: I say, when I consider these things, methinks, I am enabled by those *glorious Hopes* and *Expectations*, to scorn and despise all *Difficulties*; and it need require, even to embrace the *Flames* of Martyrdom. But as for those *gentle Toils* of Watching and Praying, of keeping a constant Guard upon my self, and contending against the Stream of my own *depraved Inclinations*; Lord! How inconsiderable they appear to me; and how heartily do I pity those *miserable crest fallen Souls*, that tamely suffer themselves to be frighted out of Heaven by such *harmless Scare-crows*! Thus, while I stand on the *Tip-toes* of my Hope, and see Heaven at my Journey's-End; I over-look all Rubs and Hardships in my Way; and pass on triumphantly, without minding them. And indeed, when the Reward of our Obedience is so great, so infinitely transcending the Desert of it; I am astonish'd to think, that ever any Reasonable Being should be so *shameless* and *immodest*, as to take any notice of those *trifling Difficulties* that are in it: For with what Conscience can we account any thing hard, the Reward whereof is a Crown of *immortal* Glory? How can our Voyage be troublesome, when our Port is the *Indies* of Pleasure? No, no, the Work can never be hard, that hath Heaven for its *Wages*; the very Prospect whereof is enough to reconcile us to all the Difficulties in the Way to it; and to carry us through them, not only with Ease, but with Triumph. For he that hath Heaven for his Haven, must be infinitely peevish, if he quarrels at a Rough Sea, and doth not bless the Storms and Winds that are driving him thither.

And thus I have proved to you at large, that the Commands of God are not *grievous*; and that, both because they are *easy* in their own Nature, and are made much more *easy* by our Blest Lord and Saviour.

But after all that hath been said, I do foresee a *material* Objection that will be made against this Discourse, and that is this; That it contradicts the *universal* Experience of Mankind. For do not the Generality of those Men that have attempted a Religious Life, find by Experience, a great deal of Difficulty? Are they not forced to strive and wrestle with themselves; and to do the greatest Violence to their own Inclinations? Are they not forced to keep themselves under a severe Discipline, to pray earnestly, and watch diligently, to prevent the Surprizes and Incurfions of those Temptations that continually way-lay them wheresoever they are, and whatsoever they are about? And do they not many times find the Diffi-

Difficulties so great, as that they are quite beaten off, and utterly disheartened by them?

All this, I confess, is very true; and may very well be so, without any Prejudice to the Argument in hand: For we have not been discoursing of what Religion may accidentally be; but of what it really is in *it self*. The Light in *it self*, is pleasant to the Eye; but yet it may accidentally be *grievous*, if the Eye be sore or weak, and not able to endure its Splendor. And so Religion, though in *it self* extremely *easy*; yet it may, and often doth, become accidentally difficult to us, by reason of those sinful Prejudices against it, which we do too often contract in the Course of a sinful Life. But 'tis an *unreasonable* Thing, for Men to measure the Easiness of God's Laws, not by their own *intrinsic* Nature; but by the Reluctancy and Opposition which they find in their *own* Hearts against them. For to a Man in a *Fever* every Thing is *bitter*; but yet the Bitterness is not in the Honey he tastes, but in the Gall that overflows *his own* Palate. And so to a *vicious* Man, every Vertue is a Burthen; but the Burthenfomeness is not so much in the Vertue, as in *his own* Repugnancy to bear it. For I have already proved at large, that *Religion* is every way *agreeable* to *Human* Nature; and therefore there can be no *other* Reason why it should not agree with us, unless it be, that we disagree with our selves. We spoil *our own* Natures, and do degenerate from the *Human* Nature, into the *Brutal* or *Diabolical*; and what wonder is it, that the *Religion* of a Man, should be a Burthen to a *Beast* or a *Devil*? But if we would take but a *little* Pains to retrieve our selves, and weed out those *unnatural* Habits with which our Nature is over-grown; we should find, that our *Religion* and *That*, would very well accord; and then that which is our Burthen, would become our Recreation. I confess, before this can be accomplished, we must take a *great* deal of Pains with our selves; we must *watch*, and *pray*, and *strive*, and *contend*, and *undergo* the *severe* Discipline of a *sorrowful* Repentance, if ever we mean to recover our Natures again. But, for God's sake, consider, Sirs, there is now no Remedy for this; and you may thank your selves for it: For you must undergo *great* Difficulties, take which side you please. If you resolve to continue as you are, you must be most *wretched* Slaves to your *own* Lusts; you must tamely submit to all their most *tyrannical* Commands, and run and go on every Errand they send you; and though they countermand *each other*, and *one* sends you *this* Way, and *another* the quite *contrary*; though *Sloth* pulls you back, and *Ambition* thrusts you forwards, and *Covetousness* bids you save, and *Sensuality* bids you spend; though *Pride* bids you strut, and *Flattery* bids you cringe, and there is as great a Confusion in their Wills and Commands, as there was in the Language of the *Black* *Layers of Babel*; and though in such a Huddle of Inconsistencies, you are frequently at your Wits end, and know not what to do, yet you must be contented to endure the Hurry; and if you cannot do all at once, you must do what you can; and when you have done so, 'tis a thousand to one, but there will be as many of your Lusts dissatisfied as satisfied: And in the mean time, while you are thus hurried about in the Crowd of your *own* *sinful* Desires, your *wretched* Conscience will *ever* and *anon* be alarming you with its *ill boding* Horrors, and griping and twinging you with many an *uneasy* Reflection. Thus, like *miserable* Gally-Slaves, you must tug at the Oar, work against Wind and Tide, and row through the Storms and Tempests of your *own* Conscience; and all this to run your selves upon a Rock, and invade your *own* Damnation. So that considering all, I dare say, the Toil of being wicked, is much more insupportable than that of a *holy* Life, and which is sad to consider, it hath no *other* Issue, but *eternal* Ruin: For the *Wages of Sin*, saith the Apostle, is *Death*, Rom. 6. 23. And methinks, it should be very uncomfortable, for a Man to work so hard for nothing but Misery, and even to earn his Damnation with the Sweat of his Brows; especially, considering, that the Toil and Drudgery of a *sinful* Life hath no End. For though Custom and Habit renders all *other* Things *easy*; yet by accustoming our selves to do *Evil*, we add to our Toil, and render those *cruel* Taskmasters, our Lusts, more *tyrannical* and *imposing*: For still the more we gratifie them, the more craving they will

will be, and the more impatient of Denial ; and so by working for them, we shall but increase *our own* Toil, and still acquire new Degrees of Labour and Drudgery. But as for the *main* Difficulty of *Religion*, it chiefly lies in the Entry to it : For there we must shake hands with all our *darling* Lusts, and bid them adieu for ever ; and to persuade our selves thoroughly to this, is the *main* Difficulty of all : For then, to be sure, they will cling fastest about us, and use their *utmost* Oratory to stagger our Resolution ; and the *old* Love we have born them, and the *dear* Remembrance of the Pleasures which they have administered to us, will make our Hearts relent, and our Bowels yearn towards them.

But if with all those mighty Arguments wherewith our Religion and our Reason furnishes us, and all those Divine Assistances which we are encouraged to ask, and if we do, are assured to obtain, we can but conquer our *Reluctances*, and heartily persuade our selves to part with them ; this is the *sharpest* Brunt in all our Spiritual Warfare : For now, if we do but keep the ground that we have gotten, and maintain our Resolution against the *Temptations* that assault it ; our Lusts will every Day grow weaker and weaker ; and that *Pleasure* and *Ease*, that *Tranquillity* of Mind, and *Peace* of Conscience which we *shall feel* accruing to us out of the Discharge of our Duty, will by degrees, so endear and connaturalize it to us, that at last it will be much harder for us to sin, than to obey. Wherefore let us stand no longer, like naked Boys, shivering upon the Brinks of Religion, wishing that we were in, but afraid to venture : But let us consider seriously, resolve sincerely, and then leap in boldly : And though at first, we may find it difficult to swim against the Stream, and stem the Tide of our *own* bad Inclinations ; yet if we can but hold out courageously a while, we shall *feel* the Current slacken by degrees, till the Tide of Nature turn, and run the contrary Way : And then we shall be carried on with Ease and Delight, and swim *cheerfully* and *pleasantly* down with the Stream. For when once we have conquered the *bad Inclinations* of our Nature, Religion will be a mighty Ease and Refreshment to us ; and we shall *feel* a thousand times more Pleasure and Satisfaction in it, than ever we did in *all* our *sinful Enjoyments* : So that then we shall find the Truth of the Text ; and be able to pronounce from our own Experience, that *God's Commandments are not grievous*,

DISCOURSE XIV.

UPON

P A L M cxix. 68.

Thou art good, and thou dost good.

I Have been discoursing concerning the Necessity of loving God, in order to our being *truly Religious*; and shew'd you at large, that this is not only the *great Principle of all Religion*; but that, of *all others*, it is the most *fruitful and operative*. And now, that I may lay this Foundation of True Religion in you, I shall explain to you the Infinite Cause and Reason that we have to love him: And because Goodness is the Beauty of a Reasonable Nature, and Beauty is the Object of Love; I shall endeavour to demonstrate to you the Infinite Goodness of God, that I may thereby affect you with his Beauty; and if possible, inflame all your Souls with the Love of him. And that I may the more fully convince you of the Divine Goodness, I shall endeavour to prove it from Four distinct Topicks.

1. From the *Nature* of God.
2. From the *Creation* of God.
3. From the *Providence* of God. And
4. From the *Revelations* he hath made to the World.

And These, I intend, shall be the Arguments of Four distinct Discourses; the Three first of which lie plainly in the Text, *Thou art good, and thou dost good*.

Thou art good. That plainly denotes what God is in himself, that he is *naturally and essentially good*; that he is of a most Loving, Kind, and Benevolent Nature, and hath a most vehement Propension to do good to others, founded in his Immutable Being. *Thou dost good*: That denotes the Exercise and Out-going of this his Essential Benevolence in the Works of his Creation and Providence; and that this his Natural Propension to do good, is not at all *sleepy or unactive*; that it is not a *lazy and restless Woulding or Volition*; but that it always fallies forth into Action, and doth most vigorously exercise it self, either in making of Objects to employ it self about, or in upholding and governing them when they are made. So that the Words contain these Two Things:

1. What God is in himself; *Thou art good*.
2. What he is in those Actions that are determined without himself; *Thou dost good*.

1. I begin with the First of these, What God is in himself; *Thou art good*, i. e. Thou art so Essentially, and according to the Unalterable Propension of thy Nature. And this, as I told you, I shall in the first Place, endeavour to demonstrate from the Nature of God; that is, from that intire Complexion of all possible Perfections whereof his Nature is composed.

For in Order to our handling of this Argument, *this* must be premised, that God is a Being endowed with all *possible* Perfections, and consequently thereunto, that he is infinitely *powerful*, and infinitely *wise*; and consequently to *that*, that he is infinitely *Happy*; and consequently to *this*, that he loves himself infinitely: And that all this is so, is very evident from the Nature of the Thing. For first, we must necessarily suppose one *Original Cause* of all Things: For else he can give no *possible* Account how those Things, that once were not, could ever come into Being; and we must also as necessarily suppose, that this *Original Cause* was *Self-originated*, i. e. that it received its Being and Existence from none but it self: For else it cannot be the *Original Cause*; but must it self be the Effect of some *other Cause* that was in Being before it: That existing of it self without any Cause, it is infinitely removed from *Not-Being*: For that which is without any Cause, can ever be without any Cause, merely from that *exuberant* Fulness of Essence that is in it self. And that which can be for ever without any Cause, must necessarily be so; because this is a most *necessary* Act, and as such, must be exerted *ad extremum virium Agentis*; consequently to which, we must also suppose, that *that* which is infinitely removed from *Not-being*, hath the *utmost* Perfection of Essence in it. For the Notion of Essence, naturally considered, is *to be*; and therefore by how much the more remote any Essence is from *Not-being*, by so much the more perfect it must necessarily be. Again, in Consequence to this, we must also suppose, that *that* which hath in it self, without any Cause, the *utmost* Perfection of Essence; must have in it self also the *utmost* of all *other* Perfections, that by way of *Adjunct* or *Attribute*, such an *inexhaustible* Essence is capable of; that is, that it must be *Powerful* and *Wise*, and whatsoever else is a possible Perfection of Essence. For Plenitude of Essence consists in being as much as it can be; and so long as any Being is capable of being any more than it is, it hath not at all the *possible* Degrees of Essence in it: For every Perfection, that Essence, by way of *Attribute*, is capable of, is a Degree of *positive* Entity. Thus *Wisdom* and *Power* are not mere Privations of *Weakness* and *Folly*; but Things that have some Degree of *real positive* Essence in them; and consequently, what Being soever hath not these, must necessarily have it in some Degrees of *Not-Being*; and 'tis impossible that any Essence should be infinitely removed from *Not-Being*, which hath any Degree of *Not-Being* in it. Lastly, consequently to this, we must also suppose, that a Being endowed with all *possible* Perfections, being infinitely *Powerful* and infinitely *Wise*, must needs be infinitely *Happy*: For where-toever those *great* Perfections are, they must necessarily supply whatsoever is *necessary* to an *infinite* Happiness: And then from hence it necessarily follows, that a Being that is thus infinitely *Happy*, must needs infinitely *love* and *delight* in it self; because within the *vast* Circumference of its own Being, it hath every Thing that it needs, desires, or affects. These are all *plain* and *easie* Deductions; and seem as naturally to follow from *one another*, as the most *immediate* Consequences do from *First Principles*. This therefore being supposed, which you see, is very reasonable, that God is infinitely *Powerful*, and *Wise*, and *Happy*; and that because he is so, he loves himself infinitely; I doubt not, but from each of these it will naturally follow, that he is also infinitely *good* and *benevolent*.

1. He is infinitely *powerful*; and therefore he is *good*. For Power is nothing but an Ability to act, and Action is the End of all Ability for Action: So that the greater any Power is, the farther it must necessarily be removed from Inactivity; and consequently, *infinite* Power must be so infinitely removed from it, that it cannot be supposed to exist without Exercise; or if it could, yet it cannot be imagined, that any Being, in whom *infinite* Power exists, should determine with it self, that the best Use it could make of that Power, were to make no Use of it at all; because such a Being can with as much Ease to it self, act, as not act. And therefore, since every Being doth necessarily delight in the Exercise of its *own* Perfections, it cannot be supposed, but a Being infinitely *powerful*, should necessarily

cessarily delight in the Exercise of its Power, when it can as easily exercise it, as suffer it to sleep on in *eternal* Inactivity; and consequently, when it can exercise its Power more vigorously, as easily as *less*, and can do more Things, as easily as *fewer*, it must necessarily chuse to do it; because as the having of Power, inclines the Agent to act, so the having of *more* Power, inclines it to act *more* vigorously. Wherefore if the doing of *Good* to *others*, be a much *greater* Exercise of Power than the doing of *Evil*, it will hence necessarily follow, that God being infinitely *powerful*, must be infinitely prone to do *Good*; because he cannot but be delighted in *that* whereby this *great* Perfection of his Nature is most vigorously Exercised. But now, for God to chuse to imploy his Power in doing *Mischief* to *others*, rather than *Good*; will be to chuse to do *less*, rather than to do *more*; when *both* are equally easie to him; and consequently, to lay a *needless* Restriction upon the Exercise of his Power; and so far to render it *useless* and in *vain*. For in doing *Mischief* to *others*, he must be supposed either wholly to *annihilate* them, or to make them *miserable*, and continue them so: But by doing *Good* to *others*, he must be supposed either to uphold them in those Beings he gave them, or to perfect those Beings; and thereby to render them as *happy* as their Capacities will bear: And certainly, to do either of the *latter*, is a much more *vigorous* Exercise of Power, than to do either of the *former*. For, for God to *annihilate* Beings, or reduce them to Nothing, is rather to withdraw his Power from them, than to exercise it upon them; because that which is not of it self, cannot continue to be of it self; it being in the Nature of the thing, as possible for a Thing to be of it self in the *first* Moment of its Existence, as to be of it self in any Moment of its Duration. So that the Continuance of our Being, and the Original of it, must necessarily be owing to the *same* Power; and consequently, as our Continuance in *Not-Being* must necessarily have followed upon the *Non-Exercise* of *this* Power; so our Relapse into *Not-Being* must as necessarily follow from the Discontinuance of the Exercise of *this* Power. So that to our *Annihilation* there needs no more than the *bare* Suspension of the Exercise of *Almighty* Power upon us, or a ceasing to uphold us in Being: For to the upholding us in Being, there is required a continued Exertion of that *creative* Power that first brought us into Being: For if we can exist of our selves, this *one* Moment, we might as well have done so the Moment *before*, and may as well do so the Moment *after*; and so *backward* and *forward* to all *Eternity*. So that unless we had such an *exuberant* Fulness of Essence in us, as to exist of *our selves* from all *Eternity past*, to all *Eternity to come*; we cannot exist so much as *one* Moment without *new* Supplies of Being from that infinite Fountain whence we are originally derived; and that we are *this* Moment, is as much the Effect of God's Power, as that we were *that* Moment when we first came into Being. So that whereas by *annihilating* us, God would chuse to exercise no Power at all; that is, to render *his own* Omnipotence *useless*, by giving it a *Quietus* from Action: By upholding us in Being, his Power is still as vigorously exercised about us, as it was in the *first* Moment of our Creation: And therefore by *how much* more *suitable* it is to infinite Power to *act*, than to be *idle*; by so much more *suitable* to it, it must necessarily be, to uphold us in *our* Beings, than to *annihilate* and destroy us.

And then, for making us *miserable*, and continuing us so; it is a much *less* *vigorous* Exercise of Power, than to perfect our Beings, and thereby to render us *happy*. And verily, should God turn the whole World into one *intire* Globe of *unquenchable Fire*, and continue its *wretched* Inhabitants *for ever* weltring in Flames, I should not look upon this as so *great* an Act of *Omnipotence*, as it is to perfect our *rational* Nature, so as to render it immutably and eternally *happy*. For to the making of any Being *perfect* and *happy*, there is required many *more* Causes and many *more* Acts, than there is to the making them *miserable*. For the *greatest* Part of Misery consists in the Privation of Happiness; and for God to deprive his Creatures of Happiness, is not so much the Exercise, as Non-exercise of his Power: For then he deprives us of it, when he ceases to do any Thing *for* us, and refuses to produce, or to contribute to the producing of what tends to *our* Happiness:

ness : So that this part of Misery consisting in a mere Privation, is not so properly the Effect of the Exercise of Power, as of the Suspension of the Exercise of Power. So that unless we can suppose, that the *Omnipotent* Creator of the World chuses rather not to act, than to act ; we must necessarily suppose, that he chuses rather to bestow Happiness on his Creatures, than to deprive them of it. And as for the *positive* Part of Misery, which consists in Pain and Torment ; I dare appeal to any Man, whether it be not much more easie to vex and torment any Being, than it is to render it *happy*. For even a Child can put a Man, yea, an *Elephant* to Pain ; but to make a *sick* Man *well*, a *poor* Man *prosperous*, a *mad* Man *sober*, or a *Fool* *wise*, are such *mighty* Things, as do most commonly transcend all *Human* Power whatsoever. But then to retrieve such *imperfect* Beings as we, from the Bondage of Sense and Sensuality ; and from being almost *Beasts*. to raise us up by Degrees, to an *equal* Height with *Angels*, to fill, and thereby enlarge the narrow Capacities of our Natures, till by filling, they are widened almost to Infinity ; and yet still to supply them with *new* Degrees of Happiness proportionable to their *vast* Enlargements, is a Work that highly deserves to be the *eternal* Exercise of Omnipotence it self.

Since therefore the End of Power to act, is Action ; and every Thing naturally inclines to its End ; and consequently, the *greater* the Power of any Being is, the *greater* is its Inclination to Activity : And since the doing of *Good* to *others*, is a much *greater* Exercise of Power, than the doing of Mischief ; it hence necessarily follows, that God being *Omnipotent*, must thereby be infinitely inclined to do *Good* ; and that because doing *Good* is infinitely the *largest* Sphere of Activity. So that, if when 'tis equally *possible* and *easie* for him to do *Good*, as not, he should chuse not to do it, he would chuse directly contrary to the *necessary* Inclination of an Omnipotent Being ; which is to do that which is the *greatest* Exercise of Power.

2. God is infinitely *Wise*, and therefore he is *Good*. For the *greatest* Wisdom consists in proposing the *worthiest* Ends, and chusing the *properest* Means to obtain them. Wherefore if doing *Good* to *others*, be the *worthiest* End that God can propose to himself ; it will necessarily follow, that by the Infinity of his Wisdom, he is inclined to do *Good*. For as his Power inclines him to act ; so his Wisdom inclines him to act for the *worthiest* End ; but doing *Good* to *others*, is evidently the *worthiest* End that God can be supposed to aim at : For it cannot be imagined, that he can design any further Good to himself, any *new* Addition to the *vast* Treasure of his Happiness ; which is so infinitely *full*, that it can admit of no Increase : So that whatsoever he doth besides the enjoying of himself, he cannot be supposed to do for any *Self-end* ; because he hath all that Good already within himself, that he can possibly either desire or aim at. So that all those Actions of God which are terminated without *himself*, must have either no End at all ; (which cannot be supposed of the Actions of an *All-wise* Agent,) or else, they must have for their End, either the Happiness, or the Misery of others : But to make the Misery of *others* their End, is by no Means consistent with his infinite Wisdom. For to make *pure abstracted* Evil, the End of Action, is so far from being infinitely *wise*, that 'tis impossible ; because the very Notion of an End, necessarily includes *Good* in it, either *real* or *apparent* ; but God can reap no *Good* from the Misery of *others*, because he is infinitely *happy* already ; and to be sure, *others* can reap no *Good* from that which God intends to be their Misery : That *that* therefore should be God's End, which is no End, which hath nothing of the Nature of an End in it ; implies a *plain* Contradiction. So that to say, that the End of God's Actions, is the Misery of *others*, is all one, as to say, he acts for no End at all : And how an infinitely *wise* Agent can be said to act at *Rovers*, to do Things without any *Level* or *Aim*, I cannot apprehend. But supposing it were possible, that *pure Evil* might be an End ; yet 'tis as evident as the Sun, that it cannot be the End of *infinite* Wisdom : For *infinite* Wisdom necessarily inclines to do that which is *wisest* ; but if it were in it self *indifferent* to the *Almighty*, whether he did *Good* or *Evil* to *others* ; yet his *infinite* Wisdom would incline him to do *Good* ;

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because in the doing *Good*, there is much more Wisdom exercised than in doing of *Evil*. For what *great Skill* doth it require in an *Almighty Agent*, to make *others* miserable? If it hath a *Mind* to turn them out of Being, 'tis but withdrawing that *Almighty Arm* that upholds them, and they will presently sink into Nothing of their own Accord: But what *great Wisdom* is there in it, thus to unravel his *own Workmanship*, to weave a *Penelope's Web*, and to *do*, and *undo* eternally? And if he hath a *Mind* to make them *miserable*, and continue them so; it is but suspending his *own Almighty Influence*, and refusing to concur to their Happiness, and they will soon be as miserable as Misery can make them. I confess, to invent an *acute Torture*, requires some Skill; but yet we plainly see that a very *little Wit*, joyned with a *great deal* of Malice and Cruelty, is sufficient to make an *exquisite Tormenter*; since even Men of very *ordinary Understanding* have invented as *sharp Torments* as Men are able to bear. So that for God to do *Evil*, requires very *little Contrivance*; and consequently, is so far from being an Exercise worthy of his *infinite Wisdom*, that not only a *finite*, but a very *shallow Understanding*, armed with *sufficient Power* and Malice, can invent and inflict as *exquisite Tortures* as is possible for any Being to bear. But to the *perfecting* of Beings, and rendring them *happy*, especially of *free and rational Beings*, there is required a *long Series* of *rare and admirable Contrivance*; for to the effecting of this *noble End*, there are so many Impediments to be removed, so many *concurrent Means* to be employ'd, such an *incomparable Skill* required in the Choice of such as are most *fit and effectual*, and *methodizing* them into such a *regular Connexion* with, and Dependence upon *one another*, as that they may all successively *second* and promote *each other*; that even the Wisdom of God, how *infinite* soever it be, may here find Scope and Matter enough to employ and exercise it self for ever. And I dare appeal to any *reasonable Man*, whether in that Method of *saving Souls*, which God hath revealed to us in his *Gospel*, (though we cannot see all, because we are not able to discern the *admirable Connexion* it hath with the *whole Series* of *divine Providence*) there be not infinitely *more Wisdom* and *rare Contrivance*, than an *Omnipotent Being* need to employ in effecting the *greatest Mischief* imaginable; whether in the contriving of Laws so *suitable* to, and *perfective* of our Nature, and in the composing such *unanswerable Reasons* and Motives, to press and engage us to the Observance of them; and in all that *admirable Series* of Providences, by which he *seconds* and forces those Reasons, he hath not exercised incomparably more Wisdom, than he could have done, in effecting the *greatest Evil* in Nature? As for Example, suppose he should have designed to kindle some mighty *unquenchable Flame* in some *dark and dismal Recess* of the World, with a Resolution to hurl all *reasonable Beings* into it, without any Respect or Consideration: This, doubtless, would have been as *great a Mischief*, as can well be imagined; but what Contrivance doth it ask, for an *Almighty Being* to accomplish such a *direful End*? Could not he have roasted a *little World* of Worms, and tortured a Company of Beings that are not able to resist him, without employing *infinite Wisdom* in the Management and Contrivance of it? Or, which will as well serve my Argument, could there have needed as much Wisdom, to design and effect *this*, as there did, to contrive and manage the great Methods of our Salvation? Sure, no Man can be so senseless, as to imagine it. Well then, if God be infinitely Wise, and doing the *greatest Good* to *others*, be a much *higher Exercise* of Wisdom, than doing the *greatest Evil*; it will hence necessarily follow, that even his *infinite Wisdom*, must needs incline him to do *Good*. For as the End of Power is to act; so the End of Wisdom is to act wisely: And every Thing, as I told you, inclines to its End; and consequently, the more Wisdom it hath, the more wisely it is inclined to act. Wherefore since doing *Good*, is the *greatest Act* of Wisdom, God, who is infinitely *wise*, must needs be infinitely inclined thereunto.

3. God is infinitely *happy*; and therefore he is *good*: For God's *infinite Happiness* doth necessarily exclude all Want, all Desire, and all Prospect of any Degree of Happiness, beyond what he enjoys; and where all these are excluded, there

there can be no *Self-end*: For a *Self-end* is some *Good* desired and aimed at; which yet we are not possessed of; and if God hath no *Self-end*, he can have no *End* at all, but only to do *Good* to *others*. But perhaps, you will *object*, how can you say, that God hath no *Self-end*, when the *Scripture* so plainly tells us, that *his* Glory is his *End*; and this *End* he doth as well obtain, by doing *Hurt*, as by doing *Good*, to *others*; by damning of *some*, as well as by saving of *others*? To which I answer, that if by the Glory of God, you mean any Thing else, but the *free* Communication of his Goodness to others, it is false, to say, that *his* Glory is *his* *End*; and if this be *his* Glory, then what I said, is infallibly *true*, that the *only* *End* of God is to do *Good*. But if you think, that his Glory consists in being *praised* and *commended*, *admired* and *applauded* by his *poor* *impotent* Creatures; you have very mean Conceptions of him, if you think that this is his *last* *End*. For what Advantage is it to God, that we applaud and commend him? Can the Praises and Panegyrics of a *small* Handful of Breath, either make him more *glorious* than he is, or more *glorious* in *his* own Esteem? Alas! No; He is an *infinite* Stage and Theatre to himself, his Prospect being every way *adequate* to his Glory, and his Glory as *unbounded* as *Eternity* it self: So that if all his Creation should joyn Hearts and Voices, to extol and laud him; yet they could not add either *one* Spark to his Glory, or *one* Degree to that *infinite* Satisfaction he takes in it. So that when we have praised him as much as we are able, he is still but as *glorious* as he was before; and he still knows that he deserves infinitely more Praises, than we are able to render him. And how can it be imagined, that he, who is so infinitely *satisfied* with himself, and hath such *infinite* Reason for it, should find any need of our *poor* Praises and Commendations? And if he finds no Need of it, how can he propose it to himself, as the *End* of his Actions, since the *End* of Action is always some *Good*, which yet we have not, but do desire to enjoy? 'Tis true, he doth command us to *praise*, and *laud*, and *acknowledge* him; but he commands us *this*, as he doth all other Things, not for *his* own Good, but for *ours*. He bids us extol and admire his Perfections, that by *that* he might engage us to transcribe and imitate them; and so by glorifying him, to glorify our selves: So that still the Glory that he designs and aims at, consists not in receiving any *Good* from us, but in doing and communicating of *Good* to us. And therefore, though it is *true*, that God doth obtain this *great* *End* of his Glory, as well in *damning* of *some*, as in *saving* of others; it is not because he doth *Good* by it. For if he should *damn* and *punish* any Being without any *good* Reason, he could not expect so much as to be praised and commended for it; but if he doth it for *good* Reason, it is because it is *good* either for himself or others: For *himself* it cannot be, for how can an infinitely *happy* Being reap any Degree of *Good* from *another's* Misery and Punishment? And therefore it must be for the *Good* of *others*; that they, by the Example of those whom he punishes, may be warned from incurring those Sins for which he punishes them, and from running away from *their* own Duty and Happiness. So that even the *End* of Punishment is to do *Good*; and this is the *great* Glory that God aims at in doing it. And indeed, considering that God is infinitely *happy*, there is no *other* Glory but this, that he can propose as the *great* and *ultimate* *End* of his Actions. For all the Inclination that is in any Being, either not to do *Good*, or to do *Hurt* to *others*, arises from Indigence and Insufficiency: Either we envy, or we covet the *Good* which *another* enjoys; the *former* of which restrains us from adding any more *Good* to him, as the *latter* excites us to deprive him of that which he is already possessed of; both which do apparently arise from Want and Indigence of *Good* in our selves. But now, in God there being no Want of *Good*, it is impossible there should be either Envy or Avarice in him; and both of these being excluded, there can be no Temptation at all in his Nature, either not to do *Good*, or to do *Hurt* to *others*. For we see among Men, the more *perfect* and *happy* they are, the *less* *good* still they desire for *themselves*, and the more for *others*. Since therefore the *great* God is infinitely *perfect* and infinitely *happy*, it is impossible he should desire any *Good* for himself; and therefore, if he act for any *Good* at all, as he cannot but do, it must be for *ours*. For,

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4. And Lastly, God loves himself infinitely, and therefore cannot but be good. For whatsoever Being loves it self, must necessarily love its own Resemblance and Likeness: For that which is lovely in us, is lovely in *another*; and if there be any Reason why we should love *our selves*, there is the same Reason why we should love *another* that resembles us in those Things for which we love our selves. 'Tis true, we *poor imperfect* Creatures, do many times love our selves without Reason, out of a mere *blind Impetus*, and *necessary* Instinct of Nature. But God, being infinitely *wise*, governs all his Motions by the *wisest* Rules, and doth every Thing for the *best* and most *excellent* Reasons; and consequently, doth not love himself, he cannot tell why, out of any *blind unaccountable* Instinct in his Nature; but he loves himself, so far only as he hath Reason to do it; and 'tis because he hath *infinite* Reason for it, that he loves himself infinitely: And the Reason why he loves himself to that infinite Degree that he doth, is because he is infinitely *perfect*, and so hath *infinite* Reason to be delighted and satisfied with himself; and this being the Reason, he cannot but love *others* that resemble him in that for which he loves *himself*. For though *others* cannot be infinitely *happy* as he is; yet they are *happy* in such a Degree as their Capacities will bear; and when they are so, he hath the same Reason, though not so much, to love them, as he hath to love himself. And he that loves Happiness in *another* as well as in *himself*, will not only love it, where it is already; but be very much inclined to propagate it, where it is not. So that this, I think, is a most *plain* Case, that if Perfection and Happiness be the Reason of God's Love, he cannot but Love it in *another*, as well as in *himself*; and if he love it in *another*, he cannot but be inclined to contribute to the producing it. And therefore, unless we suppose God, contrary to the *Genius* of all other Beings, not to love *his own* Resemblance, nor to be at all concerned to propagate it; we must necessarily suppose him to be Good; or which is all one, inclined to make others *happy*. And to say, that God loves Happiness in *himself*; but yet that he affects to make *others* miserable, without any Prospect of Advantage to *himself*; is to say, that he loves Contraries in different Objects; that is, Happiness in *himself*, and Misery in *others*; which is to make his Love to be guided by the *extravagant* Impulses of a *mutable* Fancy, and not by the *steady* Rules of Wisdom. But since it is impossible for any Being to love that which is contrary to himself, we may be sure, that God cannot love Misery, whose Nature is so infinitely *happy*: And since I am sure, that every Being must love its own Resemblance, if it love *it self*; I am as sure, that God loves that *others* should be happy, as I can be, that he is so *himself*.

And thus I have endeavoured from the very Nature of God, to demonstrate this great Truth to you, *That he is good*; and plainly proved to you, that by all those *infinite* Perfections which are the *necessary* Results of his Self-existence, he is most strongly and vehemently inclined to do *good* to others. And now to conclude all, we will briefly consider, what Use may be made of this Discourse for the Guidance and Conduct of our Lives and Actions.

1. Then, if God be *good*, this may serve to support us under all the *sad* Events that befall us in this World. For what *greater* Satisfaction than this, can any *reasonable* Man desire to be under the Government of, and to have all his Affairs disposed of by a God that cannot but be *good*? For now all Events and Accidents that befall us, must be what God designs and intends them; because he hath the Management and Disposal of them all: And to be sure, a *good* God can never have an *ill* Design upon his Creatures. 'Tis true, when his Creatures prove Malefactors, he may, and doth *chastise* and punish them; but even in doing thus, he hath a most *gracious* and *merciful* Design; namely, to reform the Offender himself; or to make him a publick Example to all the *Rational* World, that they may take warning by his Ruin, and not run upon the Rock that dashed him in pieces. And to punish Offenders, is as great an Act of Mercy to the *Publick*, as it is to reward the *Loyal* and *Obedient*: For if out of a *fond* Indulgence to *insolent* Rebels, he should let them go on in a State of Impunity, the *Publick* would suffer a great deal

deal more by it, than those Rebels can do by a *just* and *deserved* Punishment : For their Impunity would embolden *others* to take the same Courses ; and so the Contagion would run on without any Stop, from *one* to *another*, till the Whole were infected, and the Plague of Wickedness become *Epidemical* to all the *Reasonable* Creation ; and so by sparing a *few*, he would destroy a great *many* ; and Mercy to *Particulars*, would be Cruelty to the *Whole*. But so long as we are *honest* and *sincere* in our Obedience to God, we may be sure, that whatsoever befalls us in particular, is intended for our *good* : For he cannot intend Hurt to an *honest* Soul, without doing *open* Violence to his own Goodness ; because the Hurt of such an one is a *pure* Mischief ; it can serve no *good* End ; but is likely to prove a *greater* Prejudice to the *Publick*, than it can be to the Person that endures it : For as the Impunity of great Offenders will embolden *others* to offend ; so the ruining of *obedient* Subjects will discourage *others* from obeying. So that to design Hurt or Damage to a sincerely *good* Man, is to do Mischief for its own sake ; and this can proceed from nothing but *pure abstracted* Malice, which is the very *Quintessence* of a Devil ; but I am sure, can have no Room in the Breast of our *good* God and *merciful* Father. I confess, in this Life all Things do fall out so alike to all, that 'tis impossible for us to judge of God's *particular* Design and Intention towards us, by the Nature of the Things that we suffer : And therefore in this Case, the only *infallible* Course we can take, is, thoroughly and impartially to examine ourselves ; and it upon a *serious* Review of our own Hearts and Ways, we can truly say, that we have been *honest* and *sincere* to God and to our Duty, we may be as sure, that he designs *good* to us in all those Afflictions that he lays upon us, as we can be, that there is such a Being as God in the World. And if for the Time *past* we should find that we have been *bad*, and *false*, and *hypocritical* ; yet since God still continues us in this Life or Trial, and permits us the Privilege of being *Candidates* and *Probationers* for the *Heavenly* Preferments ; we may safely conclude from the Goodness of his Nature, that whatsoever he doth to us, he designs as no Harm : For how can it be imagined, that the *good* God should design our Misery at that very time when he continues us in a Probation for Happiness ? Wherefore let us cheerfully undergo whatsoever he lays upon us, concluding, that there is nothing but Good can come from a *good* God ; that even his Punishments are *cordial*, and all his Rods dip'd in Love ; and though they may smart severely, and fetch Blood from our very Hearts ; yet let us determine with our selves, that they must be *good* or *bad*, according as God intends them ; and that the *good* God must needs intend them for *good*.

2. Is God thus naturally and essentially *good* ? Then this may serve for an *excellent* Standard whereby to judge of our Opinions in *Religion*. For most Opinions in *Religion* have either a *near* or *remote* Tendency to the Honour and Dishonour of God's Goodness ; and though I will not say, that every Opinion is *true*, that seems to extol and advance the Goodness of God ; yet I am sure, that every Opinion must be *false*, that doth either directly, or by true Consequence, deny or disgrace it. For let our Opinions be *true* or *false* ; yet this I am sure, is eternally *true*, that God is *good* ; and while I am sure of this, I can never believe any Doctrine *true*, that thwarts and contradicts it ; because I am sure, that from Truth there is nothing but Truth can be inferred throughout the *longest* Train of Deductions. This therefore we ought to be infinitely cautious of, how we entertain any Opinion whatsoever that seems but to clash with the Goodness of God : For if it but seem to do so, we are bound by all the Zeal we owe to the *divine* Goodness to suspect it of Falshood, or at least, not to be over confident of its Truth, till we see it fairly acquitted of that *soul* Imputation. For to preserve in our Minds *consistent* Opinions of the Goodness of God, is a thing that we ought to be as careful of, as of the Apple of our own Eyes ; because an *ill* Opinion of God, is a Flaw in the very Foundation of our *Religion* and our Comfort ; and it will be impossible for us to serve him long, either with Sincerity, or with Pleasure, if we do not firmly believe him to be a *good* Master.

3. Is God thus naturally and essentially *good*? Then this may serve to hearten and encourage us in his Service. For, to be sure, so *good* a Master will never prove *unkind* to any *faithful* Servant; that he will not burthen us above our Strength; but most freely contribute to us all the Assistance that is necessary to enable us to our Duty; that he will not be angry with us for Trifles and *Punctilio's*; but consider our *Weakness*, and pity our *Follies*, and make the most *candid* Interpretation of our Actions, and finally judge us by the Measures of a Friend; that when we wilfully miscarry, he will not cast us off *for ever*; but will be entreated by our Repentance, and appeased by our Amendment, and graciously receive us again into his Mercy and Favour; that he will not be *narrow* and *stingy* in the Remittance of our Duty to him; but reward us a Thousand-fold with such *immense* Glories and Beatitudes, as shall make us *for ever* bless the Moment we entred into his Service. All these things we may confidently conclude, and build upon, from the *transcending* Goodness of his Nature. And what *greater* Encouragement can we expect, or desire? Why then are we afraid, O *foolish* Souls, that we are! Why are we afraid to engage in his Service? Where can we hope to find a more *gracious*, *compassionate*, and *bountiful* Master; one that will be more ready to help and to pity, to pardon and reward us? If there be any *equal* Rival between God in all the World, any in whose Service you can engage your selves with *equal* Hopes and Encouragements; go on and prosper, in the Service of that *great* Rival. But if God be infinitely the *best* Master in the World, as doubtless he is, Why do we stand Debating the Case any longer? Why do we not run, at least, as chearfully to his Service, as we would to the *greatest* Advancement that any *Mortal* Prince can tender us? In the Name of God, Sirs, be once so *Wise* as to consult *your own* Interest; and do not stand any longer in *your own* Light. Behold, the *great* and *good* God stands ready to entertain you, and condescends to invite you to the most *glorious* Service that ever was; a Service that is most *easy* and *reasonable*, that is intermixt with *infinite* Pleasure and Sweetness, and crowned with the Reward of all that an *everlasting* Heaven means. Wherefore, as you love your selves, and value *your own* Welfare, resolve once for all, with those in the *Prophet*; *Other Lords besides thee, have had Dominion over us; but thee only, our good God, will we now serve.*

4. And Lastly, From hence I infer, that it is an *unreasonable* Thing for Men to suspect the Goodness of God; because of some *uncertain* Appearances in the World to the contrary. For from the very Principles of God's Nature, we are certainly assured that he must be *good*; which is the *highest* Demonstration that Things are capable of: And therefore to suspect his Goodness upon the Account of some *little* Appearances to the contrary, is to confront Demonstrations, with slender Probabilities; and *over rule* a Certainty, with a *doubtful* Guess. And yet how common is it for Men to arraign the Goodness of God, merely upon the Account of some *visible* Effects of his Power, which to their *narrow* Apprehensions, seem *hurtful* and *mischievous*; as if we had such an *entire* Prospect of all the Relations and Tendencies of God's Actions, as that none could possibly appear, either *good* or *evil* to us, but what is really so. Whereas God knows, we are a Company of *miserable short sighted* Creatures, and are not able to see from the Beginning to the End of any *one* Action in all the Train of God's Providence: So that though *this* or *that* Action, may appear *evil* to us, consider'd singly, and in the *present* Effects of it; yet in it self it may be highly *good*, considering what a Dependence it hath upon what went before, and what a Tendency it hath to what is to follow after. For God by his *infinite* Comprehension having all Things *present* and *before* him, hath so ranked and disposed them, that from *first* to *last*, they are all but one *complicated* and orderly *united* Means to bring about those *great* Ends which he first designed and intended; and consequently, all the Passages in the World, in his *providential* Dominion over them, have a *strict* and *mutual* Dependence on each other; and so cannot be judged of *singly*, and *apart* from *one another*; there being no one Action, but relates to *Millions* of others; yea, to all others, from the *first* to the *last* Link of Action in the whole Chain

of Providence. And therefore, for us to measure the Goodness of God's Providence in general, by those particular Parts of it that lie before us, is just as if a Man should judge of a whole Consort of Musick, only by hearing *three or four* Notes of a *well composed* Lesson; whereas the whole *Harmony* consists in a *well-composed* Mixture of a *thousand* Notes and *Discords*; wherein all the Particulars are so interwoven, as that the *several* Notes united in one Lesson, have a most excellent Symmetry and Proportion to one another. For in the whole Consort of the Divine Providence, there are a *thousand* *Discords*, which, to us, who hear them *singly* and *apart* from the rest, do many times yield an ungrateful Sound: Whereas, could we discern but the whole Composure, and hear how elegantly all those *Discords* are mingled into one entire Harmony; we should never be able to forbear admiring the *Skill*, and adoring the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of the Great *Harmosies*. But since 'tis so impossible for us to discern all the *Connections* and *Tendencies* of God's Actions, how unreasonable is it for us to censure the Goodness of his Nature; because there are some Actions of his, and some Effects of some Actions, whose Goodness at present we are not able to discover? Wherefore, if we have either Reason or Modesty in us, we ought to be satisfied with those *Arguments* of his *Goodness* that are drawn from the *Principles* of his Nature: And though we cannot account for the *Goodness* of all his *Actions* in particular; yet firmly to resolve, that nothing but Good can come from a Good God.

DIS-

DISCOURSE XV.

UPON

P A L M cxix. 68.

Thou art good, and thou doest good.

I Proceed to the second Part of the Text, *viz.* the *Operations* of God, that flow from the *immutable Goodness* of his Nature, *Thou doest good*: And these, as they flow from the *Goodness* of God's Nature; so they are plain *Proofs* and *Indications* of it. For as the Nature of Things is demonstrable by their *Effects*, as well as their *Causes*; so the Goodness of God may as well be demonstrated by the *Operations* it exerts, and the *Effects* it produces in the World, as by those *Principles* and *Perfections* of his Nature, from whence it necessarily arises. And it is as certain, that *that* Being must be *good*, that hath all the *necessary Causes* and *Principles* of Goodness in it: For if it were indifferent to the Almighty, whether he did Good or Evil; he would doubtless, either retire from Action, and do neither; or else he would do as much Mischief as Good: Or, if he were inclined to do Ill, he would do it, and not force himself to *act* contrary to his own *Inclinations*.

Wherefore, since he doth Good so constantly, and so universally, he can neither be supposed to be averse, nor indifferent to it: And if he be neither of these, his doing Good must necessarily proceed from the immutable Inclination of his Nature thereunto. If therefore we can prove from the whole Course and Series of God's *Operations*, that he doth Good, it will be an *infallible* Argument that he is so.

Now all those *Operations* of God that pass out of *himself*, and terminate upon *others*, are reducible to *Creation* and *Providence*: Both which will afford us *abundant Instances* of the Truth of the Text, that *God doth good*.

1. I begin with the First. *viz.* *Creation*; in which it is apparent, that God hath done an infinite deal of Good. And hence the Psalmist tells us, *that the whole Earth is full of the Goodness of the Lord*, Psal. 33. 5. So also Psal. 104. 24. O Lord, *how manifold are thy Works! In Wisdom hast thou made them all; the Earth is full of thy Riches* [i.e. the Riches of his Goodness] *and so is the great and wide Sea*. And God himself, after his great Work of Creation, upon a general Survey of the whole Fabrick of *Beings*, pronounces all to be *very good*, Gen. 1. 31. But to demonstrate more particularly, the great Goodness that God hath expressed in his Creation, I shall briefly give you these Four Instances of it:

1. That whatsoever *Beings* are incapable of *Happiness* in *themselves*, he hath made them so far as they can be, subservient to the *Happiness* of *others*.

2. That he hath given *actual* Existence to all *kinds* of *Beings* that are capable of any Degree of *Happiness*.

3. That he hath Furnished them with all the *sufficient Means* and *Abilities* to obtain the *utmost Happiness* that they are capable of.

4. That in all *those Beings* that are capable of *Happiness*, he hath implanted a *natural* Disposition of doing good to *others*.

1. That whatsoever Beings are *capable* of Happiness in themselves, he hath made them so far as they can be, *subservient* to the Happiness of *others*. For it is impossible, that all Beings that are *capable* of Happiness, could ever have been actually happy, had not God created some Beings that are utterly *incapable* of it. For thus all the *Heavenly Bodies*, the *Air*, and *Earth*, and *Fire*, and *Water*, are Beings utterly *incapable* of Happiness; they being all *inanimate*, and consequently, *void* of all Sense and Perception, either of Happiness or Misery; but yet it cannot be denied, but they are indispensably *necessary* to the Happiness of a World of *animated* Beings that are *capable* of some Degrees of Happiness. Thus, for instance, the Happiness of all *sublunary* Things, of *Men* and *Beasts*, of the *Fowls* of the *Air* and the *Fishes* of the *Sea*, depends in a *great Measure*, on those *dead inanimate* Elements; and therefore if God had not created some Being, *incapable* of Happiness, there are many Beings that are *capable* of it, must either have not been, or have been miserable. And therefore God hath not only created these, but out of his *great Goodness* to his *living* Creatures, he hath created them in such an Order, as renders them as *subservient* as they can be, to their Welfare and Happiness. Thus the *Sun*, whom God hath ordained the *universal* Foster-father of all *sublunary* Beings, though he feels no Happiness himself, is created by our *great Benefactor* in such a Form, and put in such a Course of Motion, as renders him most *serviceable* to all those *animated* Beings, that are capable of Happiness. For first, he is created of a *fiery* Substance, by which he not only enlightens this *lower World*, but warms and cherishes it with a *fruitful* and *vigorous* Heat. And then God hath cast all its *mighty* Substance into the Figure of a *perfect* Globe, that so if the *Earth* moves round it, it might be able to communicate the Comfort of its Light and Heat to it, throughout all the Circle of its Motion; or, that if it moves round the *Earth*, it may by its Figure, which is most *apt* for Motion, be the better enabled to walk his Rounds about the World, and so visit all his Foster-Children, and refresh them with his Light and Warmth, as oft as their Necessities require. And then for his Situation in the World, what an *exact* Care hath the *good Father* of Beings taken to place him in such a *convenient* Distance, as that he might neither be *too near* to us, nor *too far* from us; both which would have been equally *mischievous*. For had he been advanced higher in the *Heavens*, he would have left us continually *frozen* and *benighted*; had he been thrust *lower*, he would have perpetually scorched us with the *too near* Neighbourhood of his Flames. But from that *Orb* wherein he is placed, all his Aspects on us are *benign*: And, Thanks be to a *good God*, we neither want his Heat nor Light, nor are we scorched and dazzled by it. For if God had not been very *careful* of the *Publick Good*, he might as well have fixed the *Sun* in the *Orb* of the *Moon*, as where it now is; and then as its Nearness to us, would have turned the World into a *Torrid Zone*; so it would have run through the whole *Zodiack* in the Space of a Month, and consequently, the *four Seasons*, *Winter* and *Summer*, and *Spring* and *Autumn*, which do now fill up the Circle of the Year, would have been all thrust together in *four Weeks*; by means whereof as all *living* Creatures would have been very much prejudic'd by the *frequent* Changes of the Air; so all Vegetation must have necessarily ceased. For the *Winter-Frost* must have Killed the Fruits of the Earth before ever the *Summer's* Heat could have ripened them; and the Fruits of the Earth being destroyed, all *living* Creatures must have perished with Famine. Since then there are an *infinite* Number of other Places in the *Heavens* wherein God could have fixed the *Sun*, if he had pleased; but none so *commodious* for the World, as *that* where it is; what could move him to chuse *this* above all others, but only his *great Care* of the Welfare of his Creatures? Once more, If we consider the Course of its Motion, how could it have been more exactly ordered than it is, for the *publick* Benefit of the Inhabitants of the World? For whereas in it self 'twas as *apt* to move in a *direct* Line, as in a Circle; which if it had done, only one *Half* of the *Earth* could have been warmed and enlightened by it, whilst the *other* had been covered with *eternal* Frost and Darkness; the *good God* hath appoint-

appointed him to run about the *Globe*; and that with so much Swiftneſs notwithstanding he is ſo vaſt a Body, that once in *Twenty four* Hours, he brings Day into both the *Hemiſpheres*: And whereas had he always moved round in the ſame middle Circle, without ever ſwerving either *Southward* or *Northward*; all thoſe vaſt Tracts of *Earth* that lie beyond the *Polar Circles*, would have been well nigh loſt in an *everlaſting* Winter; and conſequently, their *wretched* Inhabitants condemned to Famine and Cold: The good God hath chalked him out thoſe *oblique* Paths of the *Zodiack*, in which in the *Summer* he travels towards the *Northern*, and in the *Winter* towards the *Southern Hemisphere*; and ſo once a Year brings a warm *Summer* to them both. Thus God hath placed the *Sun* in the *Heaven*, as his *Almoner*; and furniſhed him with all the Advantages he is capable of, to relieve the Neceſſities of his Creatures; and every Morning he viſits us from his *bountiful* Maſter, and with his *kindly* Influence, ripens the Fruits of the *Earth* for us, and comforts us with the Warmth and Brightneſs of his Rays. And though he receives no Happineſs *himſelf*; yet is ſo framed, and placed, and moved, by the *Father of Lights*, that he abundantly adminiſters to the Happineſs of others.

And the ſame may be ſaid of the *Moon*; which is a kind of *Deputy-Sun* to ſupply his Place in the Night; and by the moiſt Warmth it diffuſes, to promote the *Generation* and *Growth* of all *vegetable* Beings. And that it may do this the more effectually, its Motions are not confined, like the *Sun's*, within the *Tropicks*, but in pity to thoſe *poor* Animals that dwell nearer towards the *Poles*, the good God hath ſent her ſome Degrees farther to viſit them in their *long uncomfortable* Nights, and ſupply the *Sun's* Abſence from them, and temperate the Cold and Darkneſs that covers them, with the Warmth and Brightneſs of her Beams. And accordingly, when the *Sun* goes *Southward*, ſhe draws nearer towards the *Northern*; when *Northward*, towards the *Southern Pole*; as if ſhe pitied thoſe *poor Regions* that are thus forſaken of the *Sun*, and ſo went in *pure* Charity to thoſe *Fatherleſs* and *bewidowed* Animals that inhabit them, to ſupply his Abſence with her own *vicarious* Light. But 'twould be endleſs to recite the *vaſt* Commodities we receive from the other *Heavenly Bodies*; and what *infinite* Care the good God hath taken, ſo to order and direct the Courſe of their Motion, as that thoſe Beings that are capable of Happineſs, might be moſt benefited by them.

But then, if from hence we deſcend into the *Air*, how proper a *Medium* is this *fluid* and *transparent* Element to convey us to the Light and Influences of the *Heavenly Bodies*? What a convenient *Volary* is it for *feathered* Animals? For being the moſt *fluid* of all Bodies, it eaſily gives Way to the Vibration of their Wings; and ſo, that as that *Air* that is under them, bears them up; ſo that which is before them, is no Hindrance to their Motion. In a word, how neceſſary is it to ſupply and reſreſh the Spirits of all Animals in general; which if they did not ſuck in new *Air* almoſt every Moment, would immediately be ſuffocated?

Again, if from the *Air* we deſcend to the *Earth*, how liberally hath the good God impregnated its *vaſt* Womb with the Seeds and Principles of all thoſe *Herbs*, and *Flowers*, and *Plants*, and *Minerals*, that can be any ways *Subſervient* to the Happineſs of thoſe *numerous* Animals wherewithal it is peopled? Inſomuch that it is become a *general* Magazine of Proviſions, not only for the Neceſſities, but for the Delights of its Inhabitants.

Thus alſo the *Sea*, that *vaſt* Continent of Water, is ſo contrived by the *Almighty* Creator, that it not only adminiſters to the Suſtenance and Delight of its own Inhabitants; but alſo to the Happineſs of all other Animals. For from its *vaſt* Treasury of Waters, it ſends forth *fruitful* Streams into all parts of the *Earth*, through divers Holes that are bored at convenient Diſtances; and forces them to climb up to the Tops of Mountains, not only that they may be able to run down again with Eaſe; but alſo to carry themſelves to ſuch Heights afterwards, as the Neceſſities of Men and Beaſts do require: So that even the moſt

In land Parts of the Earth are made fruitful by their Moistures, and all their thir-ly Inhabitants are watered and refreshed by them. Besides which, it is also most highly useful for Navigation; whereby the remotest Parts of the World maintain an easie Correspondence, and do mutually change the Commodities of Life with one another.

Lastly, If we consider the *Fire*, what a most *useful* Servant hath the *great* Creator rendred it to Mankind? For by this we do not only supply the Absence of *Summer*; but do also prepare all our Food, and render it *wholsome* and *pleasant*, and most successfully serve our selves in all *Arts* and *Manufactures*.

Thus I have briefly touched upon all the Visible Creation of *inanimate* Beings; and shewn you, how *careful* the *great* and *good* Creator hath been to improve them all to the utmost to the Happiness of his *animated* Creatures; that so there might no *necessary* Supply be wanting to compleat those *several* Degrees of Happiness for all Beings in the World; and none might be *miserable*, but those who chuse to be so. What a *noble* Instance is this therefore, of the *immense* Goodness of God, in this Work of Creation, that he hath made all Beings that are *incapable* of Happiness, to minister as much as they are able, to those that are *capable* of it; and thereby spread his Table with an *infinite* Variety, not only of Necessaries, but of Delicacies, to *treat* and entertain all his *sensitive* Creation? Who can suspect his Goodness, when the *Heavens* and all the *Elements* do so loudly proclaim it, by their being so contrived and ordered by his Wisdom, as to do the utmost Good they are able, to those Things that have any Capacity of Happiness?

2. Another Instance of his doing good in this *great* Work of his Creation, is his giving *actual* Existence to such *innumerable* Kinds of Being that are *capable* of Happiness. Were we but able to survey the whole *Scale* of Beings, from the *lowest* of *Sensitive*, to the *highest* of *Rational*, we should doubtless, find in it such an *innumerable* Company of Rounds, as all our *Arithmetick* could never be able to compute. For we see, that even *this* Earth, which is but a very *little* Spot of the World, contains in it such a *prodigious* Army of distinct kinds of *sensitive* Beings, as all the *Histories of Animals* were never able to muster: And could we but reckon down from Man, to the *lowest* Mite of *animated* Matter, that the *Earth* and *Sea* contains, we should find, that even here, there are so many kinds of Beings, as are *capable* at least, of some Degrees of Happiness, as would give us Cause enough to admire and adore the *infinite* Fecundity of the *Divine* Goodness. And is it like, that *this* Earth, which is but the Sink of the World, should be the only *inhabitable* Part of it? That since the Almighty hath so well stocked this *little* Inclosure, he should for ever leave *desolate* of Inhabitants, all those *immense* Tracts of pure *Aether*, in which the *Planets* and *Fixed Stars* do swim? That when he hath so thronged this *dark* Cellar with *living* Creatures, he should make no Use at all of those *vast* and *glorious* Rooms; but let them stand empty for ever; as if he had erected them only for Pomp and Shew, without any Design to *People* them with such *noble* Inhabitants as they are capable to receive. Well then, let us but suppose, as we may very fairly do, that the *other* Parts of the World are stock'd with *living* Creatures, but in the same Proportion with *this*; and then what an *innumerable* Drove of *distinct* Kinds of Being will the whole consist of? And indeed, considering what *infinite* Degrees of Being are within the Sphere of God's *Omnipotence*, and how *suitable* it is to his Goodness, in his Productions to reach the *utmost* Limits of Possibility; it seems no way *unreasonable* to believe, that he hath given *actual* Existence to all *possible* Kinds of Being that are *capable* of Life and Happiness, and can without any Prejudice, either to themselves or Neighbours, be contained within the Compass and Immensity of the World; and consequently, that he hath not only filled with *living* Creatures the *Earth*, and *Air*, and *Sea*; but, if it be possible, all the Capacities of an *immense* and *infinite* Space. But whether this be so or no, it is an *abundant* Evidence of the Goodness of God, that he hath created such *innumerable* Kinds of *living* Creatures, the *meanest* of which

which are *capable* of some Degree of Happiness. For unless we will assert one of the greatest Absurdities in our *modern Philosophy*, That all *sensitive* Animals are nothing but mere *Machines*, and consequently, have no Sense or Preception in them; we must allow them all, even to the *smallest* Insect, a Capacity of some Degree of Happiness. For whatsoever hath Sense, is *sensible* of Pleasure; and whatsoever is *sensible* of Pleasure, is *capable* of Happiness; and he that made so many Beings *capable* of Happiness, to be sure, never intended that their Capacities should be in vain. Behold then the *vast* Design and Project of the *Divine* Goodness, that would let nothing lie buried in the *Abyss* of *Non-entity*, whose *Idea* included but a Possibility of being *happy*, and hath given *actual* Existence unto all Kinds of Beings, even the most *inconsiderable* Animals, for which it was better to be, than not to be; that at least hath raised up an *innumerable* Company of Beings into a Capacity of being *happy*, and made such *ample* Provision to supply their Natures with all the Degrees of Happiness that they are *capable* of! For,

3. Another Instance of his doing *good* in this *great* Work of Creation, is, his Furnishing all these *Beings* with sufficient Means and Abilities to obtain the utmost Happiness that they are capable of. For I have already shewn you, that God hath so made and order'd the *inanimate* World, that it administers sufficient Matter of Happiness unto all *sensitive* Beings; that the *Heavens* and the *Elements*, by the Ordination of God, do all conspire together to contribute to our Happiness, to warm and refresh us, to feed and cloathe us, and to render our Lives, not only *supportable*, but *pleasant* and *delightful*. And of this vast Contribution, every Animal, even the most *minute*, hath its Share: So that now they can want nothing that is necessary to their Happiness; but only an Ability to use and apply the Liberal Provisions that God hath made for them: And this he hath also most graciously furnish'd them with. For in all *Brute* Creatures God hath implanted a Natural Instinct, by which they are strongly inclin'd to that which is good for them, and as strongly averse to what is hurtful and injurious: So that by their very Natures he hath impelled them to make use of those Provisions which he hath made for their Happiness: And he hath also furnish'd them with a Natural Sagacity to provide against Want; and with fitting Instruments of Sense to relish and enjoy the several Pleasures which he hath prepared to entertain them. All which he hath done to that vast Advantage, that 'tis impossible for Human Wisdom to say, how any one Kind of *Animals* could have been more exactly framed for the Enjoyment of such a Happiness as is proper to its Nature. But then, for us Men that are capable of much more than a mere *sensitive* Happiness, he hath not only prepared such a Happiness, as is proportionable to our Capacities; but hath also implanted in our Natures a *full* Ability to obtain it. For as for *sensitive* Happiness, there is sufficient Provision made for it in the common Store-house of Nature; and by the Industry, and the good Use of our Reason, we may ordinarily secure our selves, if we please, from the Want of whatsoever is necessary thereunto: For a very little of these *sensitive* Enjoyments is enough to make a *wise* Man *happy*; and we want no *bodily* Organs or *Sensories* to relish any of those Pleasures, of which our sensitive Happiness is composed. And then for our *supreme* Happiness, as we are *Reasonable* Beings, God, by giving us Reason, and Understanding, and Freedom of Choice, hath furnish'd us with sufficient Ability to obtain it. For our *Happiness*, as we are *Reasonable* Creatures, consists in the most *perfect* Exercise of our noblest Faculties, *viz.* our Understanding and our Will: And there is no Object in Nature, about which these Faculties can be perfectly exercised, but only God; who is the Fountain of all Truth and Goodness; and consequently, our Happiness, as Men, must consist in the Enjoyment of God; that is, in knowing, and loving, and resembling him for ever.

And in order to our obtaining of this, God hath Furnished us with *Understanding*, by the good Improvement of which, we may easily arrive to the Knowledge of him: For he hath placed us so advantageously in Being, that, as from a convenient Station in a Noble Theatre, we are able to contemplate the admirable Schemes of those magnificent Works which God hath set round about us; and from

from the Vastness of the Structure, the Variety of its Parts, and the *beautiful* Order which appears in their admirable Connection, we can easily infer, that such a Noble Production must needs be owing to an Almighty Skill and Goodness. And then, such is the Frame of our Natures, that we easily love that which we know to be Lovely; and consequently, if we are not prejudiced by *preternatural Lusts*, that which we behold of God in his Works, will imprint such an *amiable* Notion of him in our Minds, as will provoke us to imitate those Beauties for which we love him; we being naturally ambitious of transcribing those Perfections into our selves, which we love and admire in another; and then by imitating him, we shall by degrees be moulded into his Likeness and Resemblance: For Acts will beget Inclinations, Inclinations will grow into Habits, and Habits will become our Nature.

So that you see, God hath implanted an Ability of knowing, and loving, and resembling *himself* in the very Frame and Structure of our Natures: These things we are as *capable* of, as of any Thing whatsoever that is *Rational* and *Manly*; we are as *capable* of knowing God, as of knowing any Thing that is *knowable*; as *capable* of loving him, as of loving any Thing that is *amiable*; as *capable* of resembling him, as of imitating any Thing that is *imitable*: And these are the *noblest*, and most *essential* Parts of the Happiness of a *Rational* Nature. Now, what an *undeniable* Instance is this of the Goodness of God, that he hath not only made so many Kinds of Beings *capable* of so many *different* Degrees of Happiness; but that he hath furnished them all with such *abundant* Means and Abilities to obtain it? O *blessed* God, what Heart can be so *stupid* and *insensible*, as not to admire and adore thy *exuberant* Goodness, which hath thus extended it self to the utmost Borders of *Entity*; and blessed with his *overflowing* Streams, such an *infinite* Number of Beings! What Tongue is able sufficiently to *praise* and *extol* thy Benignity, that out of thine own *immense* Fulness hast supplied such a *Vast* Creation with such Capacities, and such Means, and such Abilities of being *happy*!

4. And Lastly, Another Instance of his doing *good* in this *great* Work of Creation, is his implanting a *natural* Inclination of doing *good* to *others* in all those Beings that are capable of Happiness. For it being his Design to propagate this Sort of Beings by way of Generation, to the End of the World; he hath implanted in all Parents, as well *Sensitive* as *Rational*, a *natural* Love and Good-will to their Off-spring; and that to such a Degree, as we see, the most *timorous* and *helpless* Creatures are not only very *industrious* to nurse and cherish them; but very *couragious* in their Defence and Preservation; which is a *great* Instance of the *indulgent* Care which the *great* Father of Beings hath of all his Children; that he hath committed them in their Infancy to such tender Nurses, that will be sure to take Care to make Provision for them when they are not able to provide for themselves; that he hath not trusted them to the Compassion and *good* Nature of *other* Beings, to be maintained by the Alms, and *free* Benevolence of their *fellow*-Creatures; but hath taken Security for their *liberal* Nurture and Education, from the very Nature and *inmost* Bowels of their Parents; who were so framed, that they cannot chuse but make Provision for them if they are able, without doing the *greatest* Outrage to themselves, and stifling one of the *strongest* Inclinations of their Natures; which Inclination of *natural* Parents doth therefore loudly proclaim the *infinite* Goodness of the *great* Parent of all Things to his Children; because there can be no *other* Reason assigned, why he should implant this Inclination in our Nature; but because he loved us, and was therefore resolved to take the most *effectual* Course, that Care might be taken of us, when we were not capable to take Care of our selves. And can we think, that the *supreme* Father, who hath implanted in all *natural* Parents such a *necessary* Inclination to do *good* to their Children, should be *forgetful* and *regardless* of his own Off-spring? He that planted the Eye, shall not he see? And he that gave the Ear, shall not he hear? And by the same Reason, he that hath so strongly inclined our Natures to the Love of our Off-spring, shall not he love *his own*? Shall not his Nature be as strongly inclined to do *good* to them? For the whole Creation being nothing

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else but the *Expansion*, or *Spreading* forth of the *divine* Simplicity and Perfection ; all Creatures do more properly belong to God, than Families or Actions do to the Principles from whence they flow : So that we are, as it were, *Flesh of his Flesh, and Bone of his Bone* ; and *no Man*, saith the Apostle, *hateth his own Flesh* ; but rather *cherishes* and *nourishes* it. And if Man doth not, can we imagine that God doth ? For as for Man, we see, the more perfect he is, and the more suitable to his Nature he acts, the more he is inclined to do good ; and that not only to *his own*, but to all *others* that are within the Sphere of his Beneficence. He finds in himself such a *diffusive* and *all-spreading* Principle of Love, as renders him an *universal* Friend and Benefactor to the World, and makes him sympathize in the Happiness and Misery of all Beings : And this brave Temper of Mind is doubtless, one of the highest Perfections that the Soul of Man is capable of. Since therefore originally we came no otherwise to the Knowledge of God's Perfections, than as we found them copied out and transcribed into *our own* Natures ; how can we imagine, that God should not be inclined to *Universal Love* and *Beneficence*, when we acknowledge it a Perfection in *our selves* to be so ? Can there be any Perfection in us, that is not in God, in the utmost Degree of Possibility ? And therefore if the Inclination to do good, be a *Perfection* in us, it must needs be in God in all the possible Degrees that an *infinite* Nature is *capable of*. And since he hath so framed all *Reasonable Natures*, that *universal* Love and Proneness to do good, is one of their *greatest Perfections* and *Accomplishments* ; we may be sure, that *his own*, which is the great Standard and Pattern of all *Reasonable Natures*, is infinitely loving and prone to do good. And thus you see, what mighty unanswerable Instances there are of the Goodness of God in the Works of his Creation.

Wherefore to conclude this Argument : From hence we see, what mighty Obligations we are under to serve and obey, so far as we are able, the Great and Good Author of our Beings ; who hath not only created us, but created us in a vast Capacity of Happiness ; and furnished us with sufficient Means and Abilities to attain it. Wherefore, since all our Powers and Abilities are from him, we are bound in Justice to employ them in his Service : And since by giving us those Abilities, he hath done us so much good, and rendered us capable of such immense Degrees of Happiness, we are obliged in Gratitude, not to employ them in doing any thing that is any ways displeasing or dishonourable to him. For what can be more just or reasonable, than that God should have the Use of those Powers which he gave us, and in which he still retains an unalienable Right and Property ? That the Temples which he hath built, should be for ever dedicated to his Service, and not turned into *Dens of Thieves*, or made Stables of Filth and Uncleaness ? So that for us to withdraw our selves from his Service, or to employ our Powers to any wicked Purposes, is to commit a Robbery upon the Author of our Beings, and most unjustly to dis-seise him of his own Goods ; wherein he hath a far more absolute Propriety, than we pretend to have to the Clothes on our Backs. And in every bad Action we do, we steal God's own Powers and Faculties from him ; and with extream Injustice, employ them against himself. Now what a monstrous thing is it, that we, who think our selves so highly affronted, when any one charges us with Robbery and Injustice, should make no more Conscience of robbing God, and alienating from him those *Faculties* and *Powers of Action*, in which he hath a far more undoubted Propriety than any Creature can have in any Good it enjoys : But when he hath been so good a Creator to us, as to create in us such an ample Capacity of being happy ; and furnish'd us with such abundant *Means* and *Abilities* of attaining thereunto ; then to *eloin* our selves from *his* Service, and to pervert those *Powers of Action* to *sinful Purposes*, by which he hath enabled us to be happy, is not only Unjust, but barbarously Ungrateful. For now in sinning against God, we fight against him with *his own Mercies*, and arm the *Effects* of his Bounty against his Sovereignty ; and, as if we were resolved to revenge our selves upon him for making us so good, and raising us up into such an excellent State of Nature, we shamefully dishonour him with *his own Blessings*, and take all *Advantages* we can to grieve and offend him, from the very *Means* and *Abilities* which

which he hath given us to be happy. He gave us *Reason* and *Understanding*, to discern what is good for *our selves* ; and *Liberty* of Will to chuse and embrace it : And we, like *ungrateful Wretches*, employ that *Reason* and *Liberty* in contriving and chusing the Highest Treason against him. He gave us *Powers* and *Abilities* of *Action*, that so we might not only discern and chuse what is best for us ; but might also pursue and obtain it : But we, like *base Caitiffs*, exert those *Abilities* in grieving and offending our most *gracious* Benefactor. Wherefore, be astonished, *O ye Heavens* ; and be horribly afraid, *O ye Works of God* ! For whilst you are all obedient to the *Laws* of your Maker, and never swerve from those *Lines* of Motion he hath prescribed you ; we, whom he hath advanced to the *highest Class* of *Beings*, and endowed with the *largest Capacities* and *Abilities* of being happy, are become so *base* and so *shameless*, as to injure him with *his own* Gifts, and to convert his very *Blessings* into *Weapons of Rebellion* against him. Wherefore, unless we are ambitious of rendring *our selves* the most *absolute Monsters* both of Injustice and Ingratitude ; unless we have a Fancy to aspire to a *Perfection* in *Baseness*, and to rival the *Devils themselves* in the most *infamous* and *ignominious Degrees* of *Wickedness* ; let us employ all our *Faculties* and *Abilities* for *Action*, in the Service of him from whom we received them ; and exercise his Gifts in a perpetual Acknowledgment of his Goodness.

DIS-

DISCOURSE XVI.

UPON

P S A L M cxix. 68.

Thou art good, and thou doest good.

I Have already handled *two* of those *Four Topicks*, from whence I intended to demonstrate the Goodness of God, viz. his *Nature*, and the *Works* of his *Creation*: Of the *First* of which I discoursed upon the *former* Part of the Words; *Thou art good*: Of the *Second*, upon the *latter*; *Thou doest good*. But now, because the *Doings*, or *Operations* of God include his *Providence*, as well as his *Creation*; and God *doeth good* in *that*, as well as in *this*; no doubt, but the *Psalmist* in these Words, had a respect to the *one*, as well as the *other*.

I proceed therefore to the *Third Topick*, from whence it doth most evidently appear; and that is, his *Providence*. *Thou doest good*; i. e. Thou doest good in the *great Works* of thy *Providence*; and thereby thou doest manifest the Goodness of thy *Nature*, in that, as thou didst create a World to *great* and *good* Purposes; so thou doest still continue to do good to it, in *upholding* and *governing* it by a most *gracious* Providence.

Now in the Management of this Argument, I shall do these two things:

1. Give you some *general* and *comprehensive* Instances of God's doing good in the Works of his *Providence*.
2. That though there may be some Things in the World that to us seem to be very ill and hurtful; yet it is infinitely unreasonable, for us to suspect the Goodness and Beneficence of the *Divine* Providence.

First, I shall give you some *general* and *comprehensive* Instances of God's doing good in the Works of his *Providence*: And they are these Four:

1. His *upholding* Things in that *good* Course and Order wherein he first created them; excepting only when the *publick Good* of his Creatures requires him to interpose.
2. His *continuing* Mankind under an *awful* Sense of *Religion*, notwithstanding the great Degeneracies of *Human* Nature.
3. His *supporting* of Government in the World, notwithstanding the violent Tendency of our *corrupt* Nature to *Anarchy* and Confusion.
4. His *contributing* to the Invention and Improvement of all those *useful Arts* and *Sciences* that are in the World.

1. His *upholding* Things in that *good* Course and Order wherein he first created them, excepting only when the *publick Good* of his Creatures requires him to interpose. That *that* Order and Course of Things which God hath first established in his Creation, was exceeding *good* and *beneficial* to it, I have proved at large in my *former* Discourse; and that God still continues the same *good* Will to us, is apparent; since he still continues things in the same *beneficial* Course and Order

wherein he first created them. For we see the *Heaven* and *Elements* still as kind to us as ever ; the *Sun*, *Moon* and *Stars* do still run the same Courses, and still they cherish and refresh us with the same *benign* Influences : And though for *six Thousand* Years together, they have been perpetually visiting us, and spending the liberal Alms of their great Creator upon us ; yet to this Day they are neither wearied, nor exhausted ; but still continue to do us good with the same Freedom and Vigour, as when they first danced round the World, and sang together for Joy. The *Fire*, and *Air*, and *Earth*, and *Water*, are still as liberal to us as ever ; and do supply us with the same Necessaries of Life, as they did from the first Moment of their Being : and though for so many Ages, we, and innumerable other Animals, have been liberally maintained out of all these vast Store-houses of Nature yet still we find them replenished with an inexhaustible Fulness. So that still not only the *Earth*, but all the other Elements are full of the Goodness of the Lord ; yea, and though in their Qualities they are quite contrary to one another, yet are their Animosities so tempered by the gracious Providence of Heaven, that all live together like Brethren in Unity ; and the Dryness of this drinks not up the Moisture of that ; nor doth the Cold of the one quench the Heat of the other. The *Fire* invades not the *Air*, nor the *Water* the *Earth* ; but every one keeps within its proper Bounds : And though in sundry Places the *Water* be above the *Earth* ; yet contrary to its own Nature, which is to flow and expatiate it self, it doth only overlook its Banks, but doth not overflow them ; being bounded by that merciful Providence, which in mere Pity to the Inhabitants of the Earth, says to its proud Waves, *hitherto shall ye go, and no further*. So that in short, the Continuation of the regular Motions of the *Heavens*, and of the *Vicissitudes* of *Seasons*, and alternate Mutation of Bodies, of the Safety of the whole *Universe*, notwithstanding the rude Clashings of turbulent Matter, and of the exact Symmetry of all the Parts of it, in Despite of the frequent Rencounters of so many contrary Principles, shews not only the Power and Presence of some great Mind ; but is also a plain Evidence of the Continuation of his Care and good Will to the World. And as he hath continued the inanimate World in that most excellent Course and Order wherein he first created it ; so he hath still preserved all those innumerable Species of Animals which he first gave Being to : So that in so many Ages, and among so many Chances, there is not one Kind of them hath either failed, or perished, or become less capable of Happiness, or less furnished with Means and Abilities of obtaining it. So that his Providence is nothing else but a constant Repetition of the Goodness of his Creation ; and all the Difference between them is only this, that in the one he made all Things Good, in the other he continues them so. 'Tis true, God hath left himself at Liberty, when Occasion requires, immediately to interpose in the Course of Nature, and to vary from the Order of his Creation. And indeed, unless he had done so, he would in a great Measure have tyed up his own Hands, and incapacitated himself from Governing the World : But yet he never makes Use of this Liberty but for very good Reason, to serve some very great and excellent End of his Government ; either to punish some notorious Sinner, or some very sinful People, that so by their Example, others may be warned from treading in their Footsteps ; or to deliver or preserve some eminently virtuous Person, or Nation, that thereby others may be encouraged to imitate and transcribe their Vertues ; or Lastly, to confirm and ratifie by some miraculous Effects, some necessary Revelations of his Will to the World : Unless, I say, it be to serve some such excellent Ends as these, he never interposes with his Absolute Power to make the least Interruption in his established Course and Order of the *Universe*. And as soon as ever he hath obtained the good Ends that he aims at, he withdraws his Hand, and immediately remits Things to their primitive Course and Order. So that if God's Creation be good, as I have largely proved it is, his Providence must needs be so too ; because it continues the Course and Order of the Creation, and never interrupts, or varies it, unless it be to do some great Good to the World. Thus God in his Providence, doth continually spread forth the mighty Wings of his Goodness over all his Creation, and thereby reaches out Preservance to the Being and Happiness of every Creature.

2. Another Instance of his doing good in this great Work of his Providence, is his continuing Mankind under an awful Sense of Religion, notwithstanding the great Degeneracies of Human Nature. It is very Strange to consider, how this Heavenly Spark hath been kept alive in the midst of such a vast Ocean of Impiety as hath over-spread the World: For considering into what monstrous Barbarism Mankind have immersed themselves, how miserably they have defaced their own Nature, and blotted out their Reason; insomuch that in several Ages, and several Parts of the World, they have had scarce any other Remains of Humanity in them, but only their Language and their Shape: I say, considering these Things, it is impossible, but all Sense of Religion must long e're now have been extinguished in us, had not the divine Providence from Time to Time been exceeding careful to cherish and revive it: And this it hath done by very strange and extraordinary Methods; sometimes by inflicting strange and amazing Judgments upon great and notorious Offenders; sometimes by showering down miraculous Blessings and Deliverances upon virtuous and good Men; sometimes by raising up eminent Examples and Preachers of Righteousness, such as the Patriarchs among the Jews, and the Philosophers among the Gentiles; sometimes by making immediate Revelations from Heaven, and confirming the Truth of them by miraculous Effects; and sometimes by permitting evil Spirits to appear to possess the Bodies of their Enthusiasts, and to deliver Oracles by them; which though it sometimes tended to promote false Religions among Mankind, yet did always prove instrumental to cherish and enliven the Sense and Belief of a Divinity. By these, and such like powerful Methods, hath the good Providence of Heaven from time to time, revived in us the dying Sense of Religion; and in Despite of our selves, continually kept us under its Awe and Restraints; which, if it had not done, we should have immediately run headlong into the most deplorable Confusions and Disorders. For not only our eternal, but our temporal Interest is bound up in Religion: For this is the Foundation of all Human Society, and of all the Blessings that redound from it; 'tis this that gives Life and Security to all those Pacts and Covenants by which Men are linked to one another, and incorporated into regular Societies. For if once Men are abandoned of all Sense of Religion, they would own no other Law, but that of their own Interest; and esteem themselves no longer obliged by their Oaths and Covenants, than 'tis their Interest to keep them: And he that thinks himself bound to be honest, no longer than he needs must, will by the same Principle be obliged to be a Knave as soon as he can. So that if once Men could disengage themselves from the Sense of Religion, and the Tyes of Conscience; all those Pacts and Covenants, which are the Cement of Society, would presently be dissolved and rendred insignificant: For what will it signifie for Men to take Oaths and Covenants of Fidelity to any Society, since whether they take them or no, they will be faithful so long, and no longer than 'tis their Interest to be so. And this vital Cement that unites us, being dissolved, our Society will soon disband of its own Accord; and we, like the Parts of a dead Body, having lost the Soul that united and held us together, shall immediately disperse our selves, and fly abroad into Atoms; and out of an eternal Distrust and Diffidence of one another, having no Religion or Conscience to secure each other's Honesty, shall be forced to withdraw, like other Beasts of Prey, into Dens and secret Retirements, and there live poor and solitary, as Bats and Owls, and subsist like Vermin, by robbing and filching from one another. And in this deplorable Condition we should be forced to wander about the World, naked and destitute, both of all the mutual Aids and Assistances of each other, and of all the blessed Hopes and Supports of Religion, which are the only Comforts and Refreshments that in such a calamitous State our wretched Natures would be capable of. So that without the Sense of Religion, we should be of all Creatures the most wretched and miserable. And this the good God foresaw very well, which made him so careful to inspire us with an awful Sense of Religion; and when through the Degeneracy of our Nature, it was in so much Danger of being utterly extinguished, to awaken and revive it again from Time to Time, by the wise and gracious Methods of his Providence; that

that so we might live happily *here*, as well as *hereafter*, by enjoying the Blessings of *each other's* Society, and the *continual* Supports and Comforts of *Religion*: For it is to him that we owe our Sence of *Religion*; and 'tis to our Sence of *Religion* that we owe all the Conveniencies and Comforts of our Lives. How much Reason therefore have we to *admire* and *adore* the *good* Providence of God, that hath taken so much Care of *us*; that would not suffer *us* to make *our selves* the most *wretched* and *miserable* of all Beings; that hath been so *vigilant* to rouse and awake *us* when we were nodding into a *lethargick* Stupidity, and sleeping away all the Happiness and Comfort of our Lives; in a Word, that hath kept *Religion* alive in *us*, in Despight of all our Attempts to extinguish it; and would not suffer *us* to destroy the Foundation of *our own* Happiness!

3. Another Instance of the *Goodness* of God's Providence to *us*, is his supporting of Government in the World, notwithstanding the *violent* Tendency of our *corrupt* Natures to *Anarchy* and Confusion. If we reflect but a little upon the *depraved* Natures of Men, what *ungovernable* Passions they carry about with them, how *sick* they are of every Yoke, and how *impatient* of every Restraint; how greedily they covet an *unbounded* Liberty, and how much the *greatest* Part of Men are of this *violent* Temper; it will afford *us* Matter of *sufficient* Astonishment, to think how Government and *good* Order could be so long preserved as it hath been, among such a sort of *wild* and extravagant Creatures; especially, considering, how much more *numerous* the *governed* Party is, than the *Governing*; and how apt the Government it self is to be rendred *odious* by *ill* Management, by the Tyranny and Oppression of those that sit at the Stern, and the *perpetual* Factions, and *cross* Humours and Interests of *inferior* Ministers of State: I say, considering all these Things, 'tis a Wonder how the *Ship* of Government should live so long, as it hath sailed in the midst of such *Tempests* and *Hurricanes*: And doubtless, long ere now, it must have been swallowed up in *Anarchy* and Confusion, had it not been guarded by the Providence of that God, who, as the *Psalmist* tells *us*; *still's the Noise of the Seas, and the Noise of their Waves, and the Tumult of the People*, Psalm 65. 5. And how much of his Providence hath been concerned in securing of Government in the World, is evident from the Care it hath taken to keep Men under an *awful* Sence of *Religion*, which is the *main* Foundation upon which Government leans, and without which it must necessarily sink into Ruin and Confusion: For, together with *Religion*, away go all Principles of *Loyalty*; and when these are all gone, their Obedience to Government will wholly depend upon their Interest; and consequently, whensoever it is their Interest to rebel, they have *no* Obligation at all to restrain them. And as *Providence* hath been very careful to secure the *main* Foundations of Government; so it hath been no less *careful* to infatuate the Councils, and bring to light the *dark* Contrivances, and baffle the *open* Attempts of those that have sought to undermine it; and this in such a *remarkable* Manner, that all the World hath taken *peculiar* Notice, and all *Histories* abound with *innumerable* Instances of it. And in all the *Rises* and *Falls* of the *Empires* of the World, there hath ever been observed a most *astonishing* Concurrence, either of such *happy* or *unhappy* Accidents, as have very much furthered their approaching Fates; which is a *notorious* Evidence, how much God is concerned in the securing of the Governments of the World, in that he doth so immediately interpose in their *Rises* and *Falls*: And whensoever in his *just* Displeasure, he pulls down *one*, he always takes Care to establish *another* in the Room of it; lest through *too long* *Interregnums*, the Nations of the Earth should insensibly crumble into *Anarchy* and Confusion, and finally involve themselves in all the *consequent* Mischiefs of it. For the Subversion of Government, like the opening of *Pandora's* Box, must necessarily let loose a Swarm of Miseries into the World: For without Government, *wronged* Innocence can never be *righted*, *invaded* Property can never be *retrieved*; but *every* Man will be exposed to *every* Man's Lust; which must immediately involve *us* into a State of War; in which like so many *Dogs*, we should try all our Right by our Teeth.

Into

Into such a *miserable* State would Mankind be reduced, if God did not *uphold* the Governments of the World. So that whatsoever Benefits we receive from the Governments under which we live, we owe it all to the *Divine* Providence; by whose Procurement it is, that *Kings reign, and Princes decree justice*, Prov. 8. 15. 'Tis to this *blessed* Cause that we are to attribute our sitting safely under our own Vines, and peaceably enjoying the Fruit of our Labours; that we are not banished from *Society*, and exposed to the Spoils and Ravages of those that are *mightier* than our selves; that we are not become more *savage* than Wolves to one another, and that the whole World is not converted into a Commonwealth of *Cannibals*: For *this* would be the Consequence of the Dissolution of Government, and *that* would be the Consequence in all probability, of God's withdrawing his *Providence* from the World.

4. And Lastly, Another Instance of the Goodness of God's Providence to us, is its *contributing* to the Invention and Improvement of all those *useful Arts and Sciences* that are in the World: For if we seriously consider the *prodigious Numbers* of these, wherewith the World doth abound, and wherein the Generality of Mankind are employ'd; we are never able to imagine, how they could have been invented and improved as they are, without the Direction of an *Almighty* Providence. For had not the *divine* Providence prolonged the Lives of the *first* Inventers of them, to such a *prodigious Age* as it did, they would not have had time to collect Experiments enough whereon to found any certain Theorems of *Natural Science*. How could they have measured the Motions of those *Heavenly Bodies*, or given any *tolerable Account* of their *slow* Revolutions, if they had not lived so many *Hundreds of Years* as they did? And though the *Rudiments* of *Proportion* are lodged in our Minds; yet it is not imaginable, how Men could ever have improved them into so many various Practices of *Arithmetick, Musick, Geometry, and Mechanicks*, had they not been either inspired by God, or had a long Space allowed to reduce them into Practice. And he that shall but seriously consider, how far out of the Road of *ordinary* Experience, many of the most useful Arts of the World lie; such as *Writing and Printing*, by which a Man may talk with his Friend a *thousand Miles Distance*, and converse with the World when he is dead and gone; will find *sufficient* Reason to attribute the Invention of them to the *Sovereign* Direction of the *Divine* Providence; without which neither am I able to imagine, how the *medicinal* Virtues of *sundry Herbs, and Vegetables, and Minerals*, could have been discovered, which now are of *great Use* to us; since even these also do lie exceedingly remote from *common* Observation.

And when I also consider, how many things are requisite to the compleating of the most *useful* Human Arts; and what Intricacy and Mystery there is in them, inasmuch that in many Cases we are not able to give any Reason why *this* or *that* Cause in our Art should produce *this* or *that* Effect; I must needs conclude, that the Invention and Improvement of them hath been exceedingly promoted by the Wise Providence of God. And what Reason have we to adore and admire its *unspeakable Goodness* towards us, that by instructing us in so many excellent Arts, hath not only found sufficient Employment for the greatest Part of Mankind to subsist by; but hath also taught us, mutually to assist one another with all Kinds of *Commodities and Conveniencies of Life*? So that now we want nothing that either Nature or Art can supply us withal; the good God having furnish'd us, not only with Materials to work upon, but also with Art and Skill to manage and contrive them to the best Advantage. One would have thought, it had been sufficient for him to have created a World for us, and therein to have furnish'd us with all that is necessary for our Being and Subsistence, and so left it to our selves to use and apply his *Blessings* as we pleased: But that he should condescend to instruct us in so many *Arts* of improving his *Blessings*, how to *dress* and *cook* them to the best Advantage, and one Way or other to render the meanest of them all *useful and beneficial* to our selves and others; is such a *gracious* Condescension of Goodness, as for ever deserves our Praise and Admiration. And so I have done
with

with the First Thing proposed; which was, to shew you what apparent Instances there are of the Goodness of God in his Providence towards us.

2. I proceed to the next Thing proposed; which was, to shew you, that tho' there be some Things in the World, that to us seem to be *very ill* and *hurtful*; yet it is infinitely unreasonable for us therefore to suspect the Goodness and Beneficence of God's Providence; that because we see such an unequal Distribution of *good Things* to *bad Men*; and do find so much Sin and Wickedness in the World; and so great a Part of Mankind over-run with so much Barbarism, Superstition and Idolatry: Because, I say, we see and find such Things as these in the World, we have no Reason at all to charge the Providence of God. For let us consider,

1. That the *Irregularities* and *Evils* which God permits in the World, are not the Effects of his Providence; but of the Choices and Actions of *Free Agents*.

2. That many Things seem *evil* to us in the World; because we take false Measures of *Good* and *Evil*.

3. That many other Things seem *evil* to us in the Course of God's Providence, merely because we often mistake Bad Men for Good, and Good Men for Bad.

4. That many Things seem *evil* to us in the Course of God's Providence; because we are acquainted but with a small Part of the World; and do judge of what is Good and Evil, for the Whole, by what we find is Good or Evil for this small Part.

5. That many other Things seem *evil* to us in the Course of God's Providence; because we judge of them by their present *sensible* Effects, and are not able to comprehend the Universal Drift, and Connexion, and Dependence of them.

6. That many other Things seem *evil* to us in the Course of God's Providence, merely because we *understand* very little of the other World.

1. That the *Irregularities* and *Evils* which God permits in the World, are not the Effects of his Providence; but of the Choices and Actions of *Free Agents*. That there is such a thing as Sin in the World, is by no means to be charged upon the Providence of God: For *that* neither commits any Sin *it self*, nor *impels* or necessitates any others to commit it. *Let no Man say when he is tempted, he is tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any Man*, Jam. i. 13. 'Tis true, he permits Men, whom he hath made *Free Agents*, to act freely; and if there be no Fault at all in making of *Free Agents* (as certainly there was not) what Fault can there were in permitting them to act *congruous* to their own Natures? And is it *just* that God's Providence should be blamed, because he doth not *metamorphose* *Free Agents* into *Necessary* ones; that is, because he doth not unmake what he hath made, and subvert the Laws of his Creation? Or is it *reasonable*, that we, who are the only Authors of Sin, should blame the Providence of God, for suffering us to be so? For if Sin be an *Evil*, it is an *Evil* to us; and consequently, we are much more concerned to prevent it, than the Providence of God; and if when we may, we will not do it, it is *unreasonable* that we should blame God for not forcing us to prevent it, whether we will or no. So that all the Quarrel we can have against God's Providence, is only this, that it doth tie our Hands, and fetter our Liberty in the Chains of an *Adamantine Necessity*; that is, that he doth not undo his own Workmanship, and thereby confess himself overseen in his Creation of us, when there is no kind of Reason for it. For, I beseech you, what hurt is it for Men to be made *Free Agents*, and left to their own Choice, whether they will be *happy* or *miserable*? And if it was no Fault at all for God to make us so, what Reason have we to blame him for continuing us what he made us? If therefore while he continues us *Free Agents*, we will needs chuse what is *evil*, and mis-employ the Talent of our Natural Liberty, the Fault is ours, and not God's; and we may thank our selves for all the *bad* Consequents

sequents of it: And since not only Sin, but most of the other Evils that are in the World, proceed from our ill Use of our own Liberty, we ought in all Reason to charge them upon our selves, and not upon the *good Providence* of God.

2. That many Things seem *evil* to us in the Course of God's Providence, that are not so in themselves, by reason that we commonly take *false Measures* of *Good* and *Evil*. We think it a very great *Evil*, for Instance, that *good* Men are not *blessed* with great *Plenty* and *Abundance*, and that *bad* Men are; because we imagine *Plenty* and *Abundance* to be a very great *Good*, and the contrary a very *formidable Evil*. And this makes us blame the *Providence of God*; because we see the *good Things* of this World so promiscuously *distributed*, without any Discrimination of Persons: Whereas in Reality, *Plenty* and *Abundance* approaches nearer to the Nature of an *indifferent* Thing, than of a very great and *desirable Good*. For, if we consult *our own* Experience, we shall find, that all *worldly Goods* are just what we make them; and that they do as commonly prove *Plagues* as *Blessings*, to the Owners of them; that they intangle their *Affections*, ensnare their *Innocence*, distrust their *Peace*, provoke and pamper their *extravagant Lusts*, and betray them, first into *Luxuries*, then into *Gouts* or *Dropsies*, *Cataracts* or *Consumptions*; and these, most commonly prove the Effect of *outward Abundance*. So that in it self 'tis almost of an *indifferent* Nature, and doth *Good* or *Hurt* to us, according as we use and improve it: And therefore though God sometimes suffers *good* Men to want, and *bad* Men to enjoy it; we have no Cause to quarrel at it: For he *understands* the just Value of Things, though we do not: He knows, that the *best* of *worldly Things* are bad enough to be thrown away upon the *worst* of *Men*; and so expresses his Scorn of the *admired Vanities* of this World, by scattering them with such a *careless Hand*, and indulging the Enjoyment of them to the most *despicable* Persons. So that we ought to *conclude*, that he sets *no* great Value upon them, since he concerns himself *no more* in their *Distribution*: For why should he partake in the *Errors of Vulgar Opinion*, by expressing himself so *regardful* of these Trifles, as to put them in *golden Scales*, and weigh them out to Mankind by Grains and Scruples?

3. That many *other* Things seem *evil* to us in the Course of God's Providence, that are not so; merely because we often mistake *bad* Men for *good*, and *good* Men for *bad*. For I dare say, that *that* Observation upon which we ground our Quarrel against the Providence of God, *viz.* that it fares worst with the best, and best with the worst of Men, is not half so general as we make it: For it is to be considered, that generally we pity the *miserable*, and envy the *prosperous*; and these Passions of ours do *commonly* bribe our Judgments, and make us think worse of the One, and better of the Other, than either of them do deserve. For those whom we *pity*, we are inclined to *love*; and those whom we *love*, we are inclined to *think well* of; and if we *think well* of them, whether we have Reason for it or no, we conclude, that God ought to be as fond of them as we. As on the contrary, those whom we *envy*, we always *hate*; and those whom we *hate*, we are inclined to *think ill* of; and if we *think ill* of them, we think that God is obliged to *think so too*. And because we are so unreasonably inclined by our Passions to pass such False Judgments upon Men, is it fit that we should quarrel at God, because he doth not judge as unreasonably as our selves? Or because he doth not reward and punish Men according to the Sentence that our blind Pity or Envy passes upon them? If we could but strip our selves of all Passion; and were but able to judge of Men, not by what they appear, but by what they really are; I doubt not, but we shall find, that even in *this Life* it fares best with the Best, and worst with the Worst of Men: But since we are not competent Judges of this Matter, we should have a Care of reproaching the *Providence of God*, with a Maxim that hath *no other* Foundation in the Nature of Things, but our own Fallacious Observation.

4. That many Things seem *evil* to us in the Course of God's Providence, that are not so; because we are acquainted but with a *small Part* of the World; and do judge of what is *good* or *evil* for the Whole, by what we find is *good* and *evil* for this *small Part*. We are never able to comprehend, how far the Dominions of the *Divine Providence* extend, nor how many Orders of Beings, as well *above*, as *below* us, are concerned in its Empire and Government: But unless we could do this, we cannot be *capable* Judges of what is *good* or *bad* in the *general* Course of its Actions. For that is *good* or *bad* in the Providence of God, that is *good* or *bad* for its whole Empire and Dominion; and though *this* or *that* may be an Inconvenience to *this* or *that* Part of it, yet these *particular* Inconveniencies may be a *great* Convenience to the Whole. As for Instance; suppose a Man should come into the Country of *Syberia*, which is a great Part of the Empire of *Russia*, whither *that Emperor* is wont to banish all *great* Malefactors; he would there find the Inhabitants in a most *miserable* Condition, they being there exposed to Hunger and Cold, and perpetual Slavery. So that if a Man should judge of the *whole* Empire, by this Part of it, he would conclude *that Emperor* to be a most *savage* Tyrant, and his Country to be the most *miserable* Place in the World; whereas in Reality, all other Parts of *that Empire* are rendered more *happy* by the Miseries of this Place, which serve to strike an Awe into all the *other* Subjects of it, and to restrain them within the Bounds of their Loyalty and Duty. And so, unless we had as *full* a Prospect of the whole Dominion of God's Providence, as we have of this *little* Spot of it, we ought not to censure his Government of the Whole, by the *little* Inconveniencies that occur in his Government of a Part: For in such a *vast* Dominion as God's is, there may be a thousand *good* Reasons, that we know not of, why some Parts of it should be more *unhappy* than others; and if in some *Particulars* he incommodes *this Part* for the *publick* Commodity of the Whole, we are so far from having any Reason to complain, that we ought in all Justice to praise and adore his Goodness for it. It is enough for us that we understand so much of God's Nature as we do, and have such *apparent* Instances of his Goodness in the Works of his Creation and Providence: And therefore, if we in this *little* Part of God's Empire, suffer some *small* Inconveniencies, we ought to bless and adore his Goodness for those *greater* Goods we enjoy; and to rest satisfied with *this*, that our *particular* Inconveniencies may, for all we know, be *great* Conveniencies to the *Publick*.

5. That many *other* Things seem *evil* to us in the Course of God's Providence; because we judge of them by their *present sensible* Effects, and are not able to comprehend the *universal* Drift, and Connexion, and Dependence of them. For, as I have already shewn you in the former Discourse on this Argument, there is a *continued* Junction and Dependence, from *first* to *last*, between all the Actions and Contrivances of *Divine Providence*; and *every one* hath a Relation to *every one*, from the Beginning to the End of all the *mighty* Chain of Causes whereof it consists. So that 'tis impossible to judge rightly of one Part of Providence separately from the rest; because we see not the Relation it hath either to what went before, or to what is to follow after: And though singly considered, it may be *hurtful*; yet in Conjunction with all the rest, it may be exceedingly *advantageous*. He that looks only on the *first* Links of that *curious* Chain of Providence in the *History* of *Joseph*, will be apt to entertain a very *bad* Opinion of the Whole: First, he is thrown into a *desolate* Pit; then sold a *Slave*, then falsely accused, then cast into Prison: *Lord*, what a *tragical Prologue* is here! But then take all those Things in Conjunction with what follows, and you shall presently see that Scene clear up, and all those *sad* Preparations ending in a *joyful* Conclusion. And if we consider that most *glorious* Part that ever God's Providence acted on the Stage of the World, *viz.* the *History* of our *blessed Saviour*; how *dark* and *gloomy* doth the *former* Part of it look, if we view it separately from the Antecedents and Consequents of it? Surely, if any Thing would justify our *hard* Censures of God's Providence, it would be the beholding such a *rare* and *excellent* Person exposed to so many Miseries and Calamities; to see him cast forth to the *wide* World, as a *help-*
less

less Prey to the Rage of his Enemies ; to behold him hanging upon the Crois, deserted of his Friends, mock'd and tormented by his barbarous Murderers, and in the most bitter Agonies breathing out his white and innocent Soul : O good Lord ! what a dismal Prospect of thy Providence is here ? But stay a little, let us but see the glorious Light that in Conclusion brake out of this dismal Darkness ; First, he is raised from the Dead ; then he ascends up to Heaven, where at the right Hand of his Father, he reigns an eternal King in full Power and Authority to give Gifts unto Men, and bestow those immortal Rewards on them which he purchased for them with his Blood. So that though singly and apart, the first Scenes of this great Providence were very dismal and affrighting ; yet considered altogether, how beautiful and harmonious doth it appear ? So true is that of the Preacher, Eccles. 3. 11. *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time ! Also he hath set the World in their Heart, so that no Man can find out the Work that God maketh from the Beginning to the End.* And therefore because we are not able to see from the Beginning to the End of God's Providence, it is an unreasonable Thing for us to censure the Whole, because of some seeming Inconveniences that we see in those Parts of it that lie before us. Let us stay but till the winding up of the Bottom, till all is finished, and present it one intire Piece to View ; and then we shall have leave to censure, if we can find any Reason for it.

6. And Lastly, many other Things seem evil to us in the Course of God's Providence which are not so ; merely because we understand very little of the other World. It seems to us a mighty Evil in Providence, that so great a Part of the World is in Darkness and Ignorance, and in so great a Measure deprived of the vast Advantages of true Religion : But how do we know how God will dispose of them in the other World, what Abatements he will make them, and by what Measures he will judge them ; whether he will not allow them some further Time of Trial, and so make good to them there, whatsoever hath been wanting here ? But whatsoever he doth, or will do, this we may be sure of, that he will damn none, but those that are first self-condemned, but those that knowingly and willingly miscarry ; and if so, then he will exact of them but in Proportion to their Abilities, and will not require Brick where he hath given no Straw. But which way soever he deals with them, to be sure, first or last, he will not be wanting in any Degrees of Kindness to them, that are fit either for a wise Sovereign to grant, or a reasonable Subject to demand : And if he will do so (as undoubtedly he will) how unreasonably do we complain of his Providence towards us ? And though in this Life, we see many good Men reduced to a very calamitous Condition ; yet how do we know how necessary this may be to the securing of their Happiness in the World to come ? For since our main State and Interest is in that other World, there is no doubt, but the Providence of God over us doth chiefly respect that ; and if so, how unreasonably do we censure it upon the Score of the present Evils it exposes us to, when we know so little of the future State, to which all its Transactions do chiefly relate ? Wherefore, let us forbear a while, till we come into the other World, and understand the whole Design and Contrivance ; and then we shall see, that all will be right and well ; yea, and infinitely better than we could imagine. But for us to censure now, when we know so little of our future State, which is the main and ultimate Scope of Providence, is just as if a Man should pass his Judgment on a Picture, when he sees nothing of it, but some few rude Lines and very imperfect Strokes. Let us have but the Patience to suspend our Judgment a while, till God hath finished the whole Draught, and given it all its natural Colours and Proportions ; and then, I am sure, we shall see Cause enough for ever to admire his Skill, and adore his Goodness. And thus you see by apparent Instances, how good God is in his Providence towards us, and how unreasonable it is for us to censure his Goodness, notwithstanding all those seeming Evils that happen in the World.

And now, what remains, but that with all Humility and Chearfulness we resign up our selves into the Hands of our most merciful Father ; concluding, as most certainly, we may, that whatsoever he doth with us, or howsoever he disposes of us, it will be all for our *Good* in the latter End, if it be not thro' our own *Default*. For where can we be *safer*, than in the Hands of an *Omnipotent* and *Omniscient Goodness* : A Goodness that knows what is best for us, and wills what it knows to be so, and doth whatsoever it wills. Surely in such Hands our Condition is a thousand times *better* and *safer*, than if we had Full Power to effect our own Wishes, and all the Events that concern us, were in our own Disposal. And if God should shake us off from all Dependence on him, and resign up the whole Conduct of our Affairs into *our own Hands* ; if he should say to us, *Since you mislike of my Conduct, I will no more intermeddle with you, or any thing that concerns you : Take your selves into your own Disposal, and manage all your Concernments as you please* : If, I say, he should do thus with us, we should be left in a most *forlorn* and *deplorable* Condition ; and unless we were wholly abandoned of our own Reason, as well as God's Providence, we should on our *bended Knees* resign up all into his Hands again, and beseech him, for his Pity and his Mercy's sake, to do any thing with us, that will consist with his Goodness ; to scourge and chasten us for our Frowardness, as much, and as long as his own Fatherly Bowels will endure it ; rather than give us up to our own Conduct, or leave our Affairs in the Disposal of our own blind and precipitant Wills. For so long as God is so powerfully and so wisely good as he is, it is the Interest of every Creature in Heaven and Earth to be at his Disposal ; and to take up that self-resigning Prayer of our Saviour, *Father, not our Wills, but thy Will be done*. For since God wills our *Good*, as much, or more than our selves, it must doubtless, be our Interest, that his Will should take place, whensoever it stands in Competition with ours ; because he doth not only wish well to us, as much as we do to our selves ; but he knows what is best for us a great deal better than we. Wherefore let us learn in all Conditions to repose our Minds in the *good Providence* of God ; and to satisfy our selves in its Management and Disposal of us : For whatsoever Condition it may bring us into, whilst we are wandring through this Vale of Tears, this is most certainly true, that *God is good, and doth good*.

DISCOURSE XVII.

UPON

JOHN iii. 16.

God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.

THE *Three first Topicks* from whence I undertook to prove the *Goodness* of God, I have already handled on *another Text*; and shewed,

1. From his *Nature*.
2. From his *Creation*; And
3. From his *Providence*, that he is infinitely good.

I proceed now to the *4th and last, viz.* From Principles of *Revelation*; the main of which is comprehended in the Text, *God so loved the World, &c.*

It is indeed, a most *glorious* Instance of the Goodness of God, that when he had imprinted his Laws upon our Nature in such *legible* Characters, and given them such *apparent Sanctions* in the Nature of Things; having made such a *sensible* Distinction between *Moral Good* and *Evil*, by those *natural good* and *evil* Consequents which he hath inseparably intailed on them; and when *Mankind*, by their *wilful Wickedness* and *Inadvertency*, had almost obliterated the Law of their Nature, and extinguished their *natural* Sense of *Good* and *Evil*, and immersed themselves in the most *barbarous Impieties* and *Immoralities*: Notwithstanding all this that he had done for us, and we against our selves, he should still be so *kind* and *compassionate*, as to put forth a *New Edition* of his *Laws*, and reveal his Will anew to us in such an extraordinary manner; that when he had implanted a *Light* in our Natures, that was sufficient to have directed us into the several Paths of our Duty; and we by our own Neglect and Abuse of it, had almost extinguished this *Candle of the Lord* in us, and consequently involved our selves in *Midnight Darkness* and *Ignorance*; he should then be so *compassionate*, as to hang out a *Light* from Heaven to us, to rectifie our Wandrings, and guide our Feet in the Paths we should walk in; was such a *Glorious Expression* of his Goodness, as for ever deserves our most *thankful Acknowledgments*. But then, that he should not only reveal to us what he had before imprinted on our Nature, and we had most unworthily *raised out* and *obliterated*; but also discover so much more to us, than ever we *did* or *could* have known by the *Light* of our Nature: That he should not only repeat his Former Kindness to us, which we had so shamefully abused; but make such stupendous *Additions* to it, as he hath done in the Revelation of his *Gospel*; that maugre all those *Impieties* and *Provocations*, by which for so many Ages we had excited his Patience, he should not only so *love* us, as to restore to us the *Light* which we had almost extinguished; but to give his *only begotten Son*, that *whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, &c.* is such an amazing Instance of Goodness, as can hardly be reflected on, without an *Extasie* of Admiration.

In

In which Words you have God's revealed Love and Goodness to the World, measured by a twofold Standard.

1. By the Greatness of the Gift which he hath bestowed upon the World; *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son.*

2. The blessed End for which he did bestow him; *that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.*

1. I begin with the First of these, viz. the Greatness of the Gift, by which the Greatness of his Love to us is measured; *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son*: *Ἐδωκεν, he gave him*; that is, he delivered him up from out of his own Bosom and everlasting Embraces: For so *Eph 5. 2.* it is *παρέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν, he gave himself for us*, or delivered up himself for us: For so we render the Words *ὡς παρέδωκεν διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἡμῶν, who was delivered for our Offences*, *Rom. 4. 25.* Now what a stupendous Expression of God's Love this was, will appear, by considering these Six Things, which are all of them express'd or imply'd in the Text:

1. That he gave him up, who was not only the greatest, but the dearest Person to him in the whole World.

2. That he gave him up for Sinners.

3. That he gave him up for a whole World of Sinners.

4. That he gave him up to become a Man for Sinners.

5. That he gave him up to be a miserable Man for Sinners.

6. That he gave him to be a Sacrifice for the Sins of Sinners, that so he might not only with more Effect, but with more Security to us, intercede for our Pardon.

1. The Greatness of God's Love and Goodness towards us appears in this, that he gave up for our sakes, not only the greatest, but the dearest Person to him in the whole World: For as the Text tells you, *it was his only begotten Son.* Which Phrase, doubtless, imports a much higher Signification, than his being begotten in the Virgin's Womb, by the Overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. For though it cannot be denied, but in Scripture he is called the Son of God, sometimes upon the Account of this his Divine Generation in the Virgin's Womb, and sometimes upon the Score of his being ordained by God to the Messiahship; sometimes because he was raised by God from the Dead, and sometimes because he was installed by him into his Mediatorial Kingdom: Yet upon neither of these Accounts can he be properly called the only begotten Son: For upon the Three last Accounts, sundry others have been as properly begotten by God as our Saviour; some having been installed by him into great and eminent Offices; others raised from the Dead; others truly ordained by him his Messiah's or Anointed Ones: So that upon neither of these Accounts can he be stiled the only begotten Son, others having been thus begotten as well as himself. And as for the First, his being conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Virgin's Womb, this was not sufficient neither, to intitle him the only begotten; because though it was indeed a miraculous Production; yet was it not so much above the Production of the First Man, as to place him in that singular Eminence. For the forming of Adam out of the Substance of the Earth, was altogether as miraculous a Production, as the forming of Christ out of the Substance of the Woman: And therefore since Adam is called the Son of God, *Luke 3. 38.* because God immediately formed him of the Substance of the Earth; he had thereby as good a Right to the Title of God's only begotten Son, as Christ himself had; because God immediately formed him of the Substance of a Woman. Wherefore his peculiar Right above all others, to this Glorious Title of God's only begotten Son, must necessarily be founded upon some higher Reason than this; that is, upon some such Reason as is wholly peculiar to himself. For if he be really and truly God's only begotten Son, all other Persons whatsoever must necessarily be excluded from that Claim

Claim ; and consequently, he must be *so begotten of God*, as no other Person is, or ever was : And to be *so begotten of God*, is to be *begotten by him*, by a proper and *natural* Generation ; which is nothing else, but a *vital* Production of another in the *same* Nature with him, from whom it is produced ; even as a Man begets a Man, and every Animal begets another of the same Kind and Nature with it self : And thus to be *begotten of God*, is to be *begotten* into the same *Divine* Nature with himself ; to derive or communicate from him the infinitely perfect Nature and Essence of a God. And in this Sense only our *blessed Saviour* is the only *begotten Son of the Father*, as being generated by him from all *Eternity* into the same *Nature*, and communicating from him *his own* infinite Essence and Perfections ; in which Sense he is truly the *only begotten Son* ; because in this Sense, and in *this* only, none is, or was, or ever shall be begotten of the Father, but himself.

When therefore it is said, that *he gave his only begotten Son*, the Meaning is this ; he gave up that infinitely great and dear Son of his, that is, his *natural* Image and Resemblance ; that *only Son*, to whom from all *Eternity* he hath communicated his own most perfect Essence and Nature. If then it was so great an Instance of *Abraham's* Faith and ardent Love of God, at his Command to offer up his only Son *Isaac*, a Son, who though how hopeful soever, yet who fell infinitely shorter of the Perfection of our Saviour, than the Light of the *Glow-worm* doth of the Light of the *Sun* ; what an astonishing Miracle of Love was it in the great Father of the World, to give up his *only begotten Son* ; a Son whom he had begotten in his own *divine* Nature, and to whom he had communicated all the infinite Perfections of his own Being ; a Son, who was the most perfect Image of himself, who was infinitely powerful, and wise, and good ; and differed from him in nothing but only in being *his Son* ; who had the Fulness of the *Godhead* dwelling in him ; and whom, being infinitely perfect as himself, he loved as infinitely as *his own* Person, and consequently, could as easily have given up himself for us, as he did, that *dearly Beloved* in whom his Soul was so well pleased : Who, but a God of infinite Love, and immeasurable Inclination to do good to his Creatures, would have given them such an *inestimable* Jewel out of his Bosom ; a Jewel wherein all the Brightness of the *Divinity* did sparkle, and which upon that Account, was as dear and precious to him, as his own Life : And hence we find the *Apostle* valuing the Greatness of God's Love to us, by the Greatness and Dearness of the Person whom he gave up for our sakes : *In this was manifested the Love of God towards us ; because that God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him*, 1 Joh. 4. 9. And indeed, without this Consideration of his being the *only begotten Son of God*, by eternal Generation and Communion of Nature with him, God's Love in giving him up for us, would not be comparably so considerable as it is. For if, according to the Doctrine of the *Socinians*, he should only have caused a Man to be born for us after another manner than other Men are, and then have delivered him for our sake ; there would have been no such great Expression of his Love in this Way of redeeming us, more than what must have appeared, should he have chosen to redeem us any other Way. To have redeemed us indeed, by what Means soever, would have been a most glorious Expression of his Love and good Will to us ; but since the *Scripture* hath raised the Consideration of God's Love higher, from the Dignity of the Person whom he sent to redeem us ; by how much higher the Dignity of this Person is, by so much greater is the Estimation of his Love. But if the Dignity of *Christ's* Person, as the *only begotten Son of God*, consisted merely in being a Man, born into the World in such an extraordinary Manner ; this would have made such an inconsiderable Addition to his Love, in redeeming us, that he would have much more aggrandized his Kindness to us, to have offered up an *Angel of Heaven* for us, though of the most inferior Order, than to have thus delivered up his only begotten Son. But to offer up his *natural* Son, to whom he had communicated his Nature ; his Son, who was God co-eternal and co-essential with himself, was a more transcendent Expression of his Love to us, than if he had unpeopled *Heaven* for our sakes, and deli-

delivered up to us the whole *Choir of Angels, and Archangels, and Seraphims.*

2. The Greatness of God's Love and Goodness towards us appears in this also, that he gave up his *only begotten Son* for us when we were Sinners : And this is implied in that Expression, *God so loved the World*; that is, the World as it then was, a *base, depraved and degenerate* World : For of this very World whom God thus loved, the *Apostle* gives this *extream bad* Character, *the whole World lieth in Wickedness.* 1 Joh. 5. 19. And St. Paul distributing the whole World into *Jews and Gentiles*, pronounces universally concerning them, *that they were all under Sin.* Rom. 3. 9. So that in giving up his Son for such a World as this, he must necessarily give him for Sinners. And certainly, should we measure God's Goodness by *our own*, this Consideration is enough to render his giving his only begotten Son for us, a most *incredible* Expression of it ; that when by our Sins we had provoked him beyond the Sufferance of any Patience but *his own* ; when in Despair of all those *innumerable* Mercies wherewith from Time to Time he had sought to oblige us, and maugre all those *Stupendous* Judgments with which from *one Generation to another*, he hath endeavoured to curb and restrain us ; when he had used so many *effectual* Arts to reclaim and amend us, and we by *our own* Obstinacy, had baffled and defeated them all ; and instead of mending, grew *worse and worse* under all his *powerful* Applications ; one would have thought, that now at last, instead of trying any further Experiments on us, he might have been sufficiently provok'd to give us up, as *Physicians* do their *Patients* when they are past all Hope of Recovery, and so let us alone to perish in *our own* Obstinacy. And doubtless, if after all these Provocations, we had known, that he had intended to send his Son into the World, *our own* Guilt and Consciousness would have made us conclude, that the Design of his sending him, was only to ruine and destroy us, to extirpate the whole Race of us from the Face of the Earth, that so his Creation might be no longer *scandalized* with the Remembrance of such a Generation of Monsters. But now, that after so many *repeated* Affronts and Rebellions, and in the midst of so many *loud-crying* Guilts that perpetually rang in his Ears, he should still persevere to love us in such a *transcendent* Degree, as to part with what is *nearest and dearest* to him, for our sakes, even his only *begotten* Son out of his Bosom ; is such an *astonishing* Expression of his Goodness to us, as we can never sufficiently magnifie and admire. Had Mankind been as *innocent*, as they are *guilty* before God ; had their Vertues been as *great* and as *numerous* as their Crimes were ; yet to send this *Great* Son down from *Heaven* to visit them, had been such an Instance of *condescending* Goodness in him, as would have justly merited our *everlasting* Praise and Remembrance : But to send him down to Sinners, to such a Race of *obstinate* and *incorrigible* Sinners ; and that not to destroy, but to save 'em ; to obtain for, and tender to them a Kingdom of *immortal* Pleasures, and use all *possible* Means safely to conduct them thither ; Lord, what a Miracle of Love is this ! And hence the *Apostle* estimates this *prodigious* Instance of the Love of God, by the *Undeservingness* of those upon whom it was exercised : *But God, says he, commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us,* Rom. 5. 8.

3. The Greatness of God's Love and Goodness towards us, appears in this also, that he gave up his *only begotten Son* for the whole World of Sinners : He did not confine and limit this *great* Design of his Goodness, by granting a *Monopoly* of it to a *few particular* Favourites ; but settled it as a *publick* Charter on the whole Corporation of Mankind : For he *so loved the World*, says the Text, *that he gave his only begotten Son* ; that is, for the Benefit of the World. For how could his giving of his Son have been an Expression of his Love to the World, if he had not given him for the *publick* Benefit of the World ? Had his Design been to restrain his Gift to a *few particular* Persons, whom he had designed to rescue from the general Shipwreck, the Text must have run thus ; *God so loved some particular Persons in the World, that he gave up his only begotten Son.* For to make that Instance, of his Love to *all*, which he designed only for the Benefit of a *few*, is to pretend
a Love

a Love to the *greatest* Part of Men, which he never intended them: For that by the *World* here he means the whole World, he himself assures us, 1 Joh. 2. 2. *And he is the Propitiation for our Sins: And not for ours only; but also for the Sins of the whole World.* And what he means by the *whole World*, he tells in the same *Epistle* 1 Joh. 5. *The whole World lieth in Wickedness.* So that this whole World that lies in Wickedness, is that whole World for whose Sins *Christ* is a Propitiation; and that whole World, for whose sake *Christ* is a Propitiation, is the World whom God so loved, as to give his only begotten Son for. But the *Apostle* yet more expressly tells us, that the *Head of every Man is Christ* 1 Cor. 11. 3. And if so, then every Man is a Part of *Christ's Body*; and if so, then every Man hath a Communion in the Benefits of his Blood; for *Ephes.* 5. 23. he is said to be the *Saviour of the Body*; and more expressly yet, *Ileb.* 2. 9. it is said, that *By the Grace of God, he tasted Death for every Man.* So that the *Scripture* hath as emphatically declared the universal Extent of this great Gift of God's Love, as it was possible for it to do in any *Human Words*: And methinks, 'tis strange that any Men should presume to restrain it, when they have no other Defence for so doing, but only an odd Distinction that makes the *whole World* to signify the *smallest Part* of it; the *Body of Christ* to import a few particular Atoms of it; and every Man to denote one Man of Ten Thousand.

Behold then the *immense Goodness* of God, that hath not only given up his Son, for Sinners; but for a *whole World* of Sinners; and excluded none but those who exclude themselves from the Benefits of this mighty Donation! That hath planted this *heavenly Tree of Life* in the midst of a *sick and sinful World*; and hath not confined or inclosed it for the Use of a few selected Patients; but laid it open for all *Comers*, that *whosoever* would, might take of its Fruit, and eat, and live for ever. O good God! How vast is thy Love, that hath thus impartially diffused it self over such a wide World of Sinners, that in this *stupendous* Gift of thy Son hath so kind a Respect to every *Individual*, and made no Exception of any, how *sinful* and *unworthy* soever, that will but comply with the *merciful Terms* and Conditions of it.

4. The Greatness of God's Love and Goodness towards us, appears also in this, that he hath given up his only begotten Son to become a Man for Sinners. For whatsoever he was upon God's giving him up, he was what God gave him up to be; and therefore, since upon God's giving him up, he became a Man, it necessarily follows, that he gave him up to become so. And indeed, since God had such a *merciful Design*, as to send his Son into the World to reform and save it; it was highly convenient for us, though not for him, that he should come to us in our own Natures, not only that he might consecrate *Human Nature* that had been so miserably defecrated and prophaned; but also, that he might endear himself to us by the great Honour he did us in assuming our Natures; and that having our Passions, and being in our Circumstances, he might by his own Practice, give us an Example how to govern the one, and how to behave our selves in the other. Had he come down from the *Heavens*, inrobed with Splendor and Light, and preached his Gospel to us in the midst of a *Choir of Angels*, from some bright Throne in the Clouds; this indeed, would have been more convenient for him, as being more suitable to the natural Dignity and Majesty of his Person. But the All-merciful Father, in the Disposal of his Son, consulted not so much his Convenience as ours: He knew well enough, that should he have sent his Son to us in such an illustrious Equipage, his Appearance among us would have been more apt to astonish, than to instruct us; and to have fixed our Thoughts in a profound Admiration of his Glory, than to have directed our Steps in the Paths of Vertue and true Happiness; and that it would be much more for our Interest, that he should conduct us by his Example, than amaze us by his Appearance: And therefore that he might do so, he sent him to us in our own Natures; that so going before us as a Man, he might shew us by his Example, what became Men to do, and direct us by the Print of his own Footsteps. Since therefore he assumed our Nature, purely for our sakes; what a stupendous Instance of God's Goodness was this; that for the sake of a World of miserable Sinners, he should be content, that

his own most *dear* and most *glorious* Son should condescend to become a Man, and to empty himself into our Nature; that he, who by the *Divinity* of his Nature, was exalted more above that of the *highest* Angel, than that is above the *lowest* Animal, would personally unite himself to a *Handful of Dust*, and marry his *Divinity* to the *Infirmities* of our Nature; that he, whose *Throne* was in the *Heavens*, and before whose *sacred* Feet the whole *Choir of Heavenly Angels* lie prostrate, should abase himself so *low*, as to come down among *Mortals*, and associate himself with *Companions* so unworthy of him? O *good God*! When thou hast condescended so *low*, what is there thou wilt not condescend to, to do *good* to thy *Creatures*? But this is not all, you shall see him stoop *lower* yet; For,

5. The Greatness of God's Love and Goodness towards us, appears also in this, that he gave up *his only begotten Son* to become a *miserable* Man for Sinners. It would have been some Abatement to his *mighty* Condescension, if when he sent him down among us in our Nature, he had made him *supreme visible* Monarch of the World; if he had crowned him with all the Splendors of an *Earthly Condition*; if he had ushered him into the World in a *triumphal Chariot*, with all the Kings of the Earth, either *prostrate* before him, or chained at his Chariot-Wheels: This, though a *vast* Condescension in the *eternal* Son, yet would not have been so *low*, as it was to be born of a *poor* Mother, to be educated as a *Carpenter's Son*, to be exposed to *Want*, and *Penury*, to the *Contempt* of every *sordid* Wretch, and the *perpetual* Persecutions of a *bovish* and *ill-natur'd* Rabble: And yet this was the *wretched* State to which God humbled *his own dear* Son for our sakes. For the Design of his Humiliation being to raise us, the most *merciful* Father consulted not so much what was for his Ease, as what was for our Benefit: For he knew well enough, that should he have introduced him into the World in *Earthly Pomp* and *Magnificence*, it would not have been so well for us; that we were too *ambitious* already of the *Vanities* of this World, and that had been the great Snare that had entangled and ruined us; and that therefore it was necessary, when his Son came amongst us, he should take us off from our *over-eager* Pursuit of them, disgrace and expose them to us by his own *voluntary* Refusal of them; that by seeing him trample on them, when they lay all at his Feet, we might learn to despise them, and be at length convinced, what *foolish* Bargains we make, when we sell our *Innocence* and our *Happiness* for such *insignificant* Trifles. He thought it much more *necessary* for us, that his Son should exercise his *Vertue*, than display his *Greatness* among us; and therefore he placed him in such Circumstances of *Human* Life, wherein by his own Example, he might copy out to us the *noblest* Pattern of *holy* Living. For of all States, that of Affliction affords the *largest* Sphere to exercise *Human* Vertue in: And therefore in this State, out of his *good* Will to us, he placed his own Son, that herein he might set us a Pattern of *Obedience* to, and *Contempt* of the World; of *Patience*, and *Courage*, and *Meekness*, and *Resignation* to the Will of God; that so by his Example we might be excited to the Exercise of all those *passive* Vertues, which are not only most *glorious*, but most *difficult* to *Human* Nature; and that by beholding how *mean*, and yet how *good*, he was, we might all become more *ambitious* of being *good*, than *great* in the World.

Now, what an *amazing* Instance of God's Goodness is this, that merely for our sakes, to promote our *Happiness*, he should depress his own Son into such a *miserable* Condition, that he who was in the *Form of God*, who thought it no *Robbery* to be equal with God, should, by the Appointment of *his own* Father, to whom he was so infinitely *dear*, make himself of *no Reputation*, take on him the Form of a *Servant*, become a *Man of Sorrows*, and acquaint himself with *Griefs*; and all this to put himself into a *better* Capacity of doing *good* to the World? Good God! when I consider with my self, that once there was a Time when thou didst send thy *blessed* Son from *Heaven* to assume my Nature; that therein he dwelt upon this Earth, and conversed with such *poor* Mortals as my self; that he suffered himself to be despised and persecuted, and by thy own Appointment, wandered

about

about like a poor Wretch, *naked and destitute* of all those Comforts which I abundantly enjoy; and all this, that he might the more effectually do good to a World of *ill-natured Sinners*; Methinks, this *wondrous* Prodigy of Love, not only *puzzles* my Conceit, but out-reaches my Wonder and Admiration: And though it be a Love that exceeds my *largest* Thoughts, such as I have *infinite* Cause to rejoice in; but could never have had the Impudence to expect; yet, while I stand gazing on it, methinks, I am like one that is looking down from a *stupendous* Precipice, whose Height fills me with a trembling Horror, and even oversets my Reason.

6. And Lastly, The Greatness of God's Love and Goodness towards us, appears also in this, that he gave his *only begotten Son* to be a *Sacrifice* for the Sins of *miserable Sinners*: And this is plainly implied in that Expression, *he gave his only begotten Son*: For in the *Two Verses* following the Text, our Saviour foretels his own Death: For as Moses, saith he, *lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up*: That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal Life: And then it immediately follows, *for God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son*; that is, he gave him to be *lifted up* upon the Cross, even as the Serpent was *lifted up* by Moses in the Wilderness; that so by his precious Death and Sacrifice, he might make an Atonement for the Sins of the World. And accordingly, he is said to be *delivered up for our Offences*, Rom. 4. 25. even as the Sacrifice was delivered up at the Door of the Tabernacle, to propitiate God for the Sins of the Offerer. For to compleat the *propitiatory Sacrifices* under the Law, three Things were requisite; First, the *offering* of it at the Door of the Tabernacle; the *slaying* of it, and the *presenting* of its Blood, either within the *Holy of Holies*, or elsewhere; all which were found in the Sacrifice of our Blessed Saviour. First, he offered himself to God, as a willing Victim for the Sins of the World. Hence Job. 17. 19. *For this Cause, saith he, do I sanctify myself*; that is, offer up my self as a Sacrifice to thee: For so in Levit. 22. 23. and sundry other Places, to *hallow*, or *sanctify* any thing to the Lord, denotes the offering it to him in Sacrifice. And accordingly, we find, that *that Prayer* by which Christ consecrated himself to the Lord, Job. 17. was much like that by which the *High Priest* did consecrate his *Victims* before the Altar, on the great Day of Expiation: For as he, before he slew the Sacrifice, did first commend himself and his own Family; then the Family of Aaron, and the whole Congregation, to the Lord; so our Saviour, in this excellent Prayer, whereby he sanctified himself to his Father a Sacrifice for the Sins of the World, first commended *himself* to him, then his *Apostles*, then all those who should afterwards believe in his Name; which having done, he went forth presently to the Place where he was apprehended, and carried to Judgment, and condemned to Death. Then, as a *propitiatory Sacrifice*, he was slain for our Sins: For so St. Peter tells us, Ephes. 2. 24. *He bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree*; that is, that *natural Evil* of a most *shameful* and *painful* Death, was inflicted on him for our Sins, that so he might make an Expiation for them, and free us from the Guilt and Punishment that was due to them. Hence in that Prophecy of him Isa. 53. we often meet with such Expressions as these; *surely, he hath born our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows; he was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities: The Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed. The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all: For the Transgression of my People was he stricken: Thou shalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin, and he shall bear their Iniquities: He was numbered with the Transgressors, and he bare the Sin of many, and made Intercession for the Transgressors.*

All which Expressions do plainly imply, that what he suffered, he suffered for our Sins, as a Sacrifice substituted in the room of us who were the Offenders; that so he might make Expiation for us, and obtain our Pardon from his Father. And accordingly, in the *New Testament* he is said to be *made a Curse for us*, to be our *Ransom* and *Propitiation*, to *redeem* and *reconcile* us, and *obtain* the Remission of our Sins by his Blood; to *die* for us, and for our Sins, and to be our *Propitiation*. All which Expressions being applied to the *Sacrifices of Atonement* under the Law, and from

them derived upon our Saviour, do plainly denote him to be a Sacrifice of Atonement for the Sins of the World. And then Lastly, There is the presenting of his Blood for us in Heaven, and in the Virtue thereof, his interceding for us with his Father. And hence, the Blood of Christ, as it is now presented in Heaven, is called the *Blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel*, Heb. 12. 24. In which he plainly alludes to the *High Priest's* sprinkling of the Blood of the Sacrifice in the *Holy of Holies*, which was a Type of Christ's presenting his Blood for us in Heaven; as you may see, Heb. 9. 7. compared with the 11th and 12th Verses. Verse 7, he tells us, that *the High Priest entered not into the Holy of Holies without Blood*: But then Verse 12, it is said, that *Christ with his own Blood entred in once into the holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us*. And in Virtue of his Blood, which he poured out as a Sacrifice for our Sins, upon the Cross, he now pleads our Cause at the *right Hand* of his Father, and ever lives to make Intercession for us.

So that you see, the Death of Christ had in it all the *necessary* Ingredients of a *propitiatory* Sacrifice for the Sins of the World; and having so, what a *prodigious* Instance is it of the Love of God to us, that rather than destroy us, he would give up his own *Son* to be a Sacrifice for us? I do not deny, but if he had pleased, he might have pardoned and saved us without any Sacrifice at all; but he knew very well, that if he should do so, it would be much worse for us. He knew, that if he should pardon our Sins without giving us some great Instance of his *implacable* Hatred of them, we should be too prone to presume upon his Lenity, and thereupon to return again to our *old* Vomit and Uncleaness: And therefore, though it would have been more for the Ease and Interest of his *blessed* Son, to have pardoned us without any Sacrifice at all; yet such was his Love to us, that because he foresaw that this Way of pardoning would prove *fatal* and *dangerous* to us, he was resolved that he would not do it, without being moved thereunto by the *greatest* Sacrifice that the World could afford him; and that no *less* a Propitiation should appease his Wrath against Offenders, than the Blood of *his own* Son; that so by beholding his Severity against our Sins in this *unvaluable* Sacrifice of the Blood of his *Son*, we might be sufficiently terrified from returning again to them, by the very same Reason that moved him to pardon them; that we might not think light of that which God would not forgive without such a *vast* Consideration; but might tremble to think of repeating those Sins, the Price of whose Pardon was the *dearest* Blood of the *Son of God*. Hence is that of the *Apostle*, Rom. 3. 25, 26. *Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness*; that is, his righteous Severity against Sin, for the Remission of Sins that are past, through the Forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his Righteousness; that he might be just; that is, sufficiently severe against the Sins of Men, so as to warn them from returning, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. So that now he hath reduced Things to an *excellent* Temper; having so provided, that neither himself, nor we, might be damnified; that we might not suffer by our doing again what we have done; and that he might not suffer by our doing still the same; that he might be what he is, a *pure* and a *holy* Saviour; and that we might be what we ought, *dutiful* and *obedient* Subjects. Now, what an *amazing* Instance of God's Love is this, that he should so far consult the *good* of his Creatures, as to sacrifice his own *Son* to their Benefit and Safety? How inexpressibly must he needs love us, that for our sakes could behold his most *dearly beloved* Son hanging on a Cross, covered with Wounds and Blood, forsaken by his Friends, despised and spit on by his *Barbarous* Enemies; that could hear him complain in the Bitterness of his Soul, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And yet suffer him to continue under that *unsufferable* Agony, till he had given up his *white* and *innocent* Soul, an *unspotted* Sacrifice for the Sins of the World: Yea, notwithstanding the infinite Love that he bore him, and the *piteous* Moans that his Torments forced from him, was so far from relieving him, that for our sakes he inflicted upon him the *utmost* Misery that *Human* Nature could bear; that so having an *experimental* Sence of the most *grievous* Suffering that

that Mankind is liable to, and being touched with the *utmost* Feeling of our Infirmities, and in all Points tempted like unto *us*, he might carry a more tender Commiseration for us to *Heaven*, and know the *better* how to pity *us* in our Grievs and Extremities. For in all things it behoved him, saith the Apostle, to be made like unto his Brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, Heb. 2. 17.

Hear, O *Heavens*, and give Ear, O *Earth*, and let all the Creation attend with Astonishment to this stupendous Story of Love, which so far exceeds all the *heroick* Kindnesses that ever any *Romance* of Friendship thought of, that no less Evidence than that of Miracles, could have ever rendred it credible. Well then might the Apostle say, *herein is Love, not that we loved God*; for after such vast Obligations, this is no great Wonder; but that he loved *us*, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins, 1 Joh. 4. 10. And thus you see, what an unspeakable Instance of the Love of God, his giving his only begotten Son is. I shall now conclude this Argument with a few practical Inferences from the whole.

1. From hence I infer, what monstrous Ingratitude it would be in *us*, to deny any Thing to God that he demands at our Hands, who hath been so liberal to *us*, as to give up his only begotten Son for our sakes. O blessed God! If it were possible for *us* to do, or suffer for thee, a thousand Times more than at present we are able, what a poor Return were this for the Gift of thy Son, that unspeakable Expression of thy Goodness? And can we deny thee any Thing after such an Instance of Love, especially, when thy Demands are so gentle and reasonable? When he requires nothing of *us* but what is for our good; and the Requital he demands for all his Love to *us*, is only that we should Love our selves, and express this Love in doing those Duties which he therefore enjoyns, because they tend to our Happiness; and avoiding those Sins which he therefore forbids, because he knows, they will be our Bane and Poyson? Can any of my Lusts be as dear to me, as the only begotten Son was to the Father of all things? And yet he parted with him out of Love to me; and shall not I part with these for the Love of him? How can we pretend to any Thing that is modest or ingenuous, tender or apprehensive in Human Nature, when nothing will oblige *us*, no, not this astonishing Love of God in sending his Son from *Heaven* to live and die Miserably for our sakes; Lord! What do thy Holy Angels think of *us*? How do thy blessed Saints resent our Unkindness towards thee? Yea, how justly do the Devils themselves reproach and upbraid our Baseness; who, bad as they are, were never so much Devils yet, as to make an ungrateful Return of such a vast Obligation?

2. From hence I infer, how desperate our Condition will be, if we defeat the End of this Gift of the Son of God, and render it ineffectual to *us*. For God hath no more Sons to bestow upon *us*, he being the only begotten of his Father; *Heaven* and *Earth* are not able to furnish him with such another Gift to bestow upon *us*: And if he should lay a Tax upon all his Creation, to raise one great Contribution to the Happiness of Mankind, and exact the utmost of every Creature that it is able to Contribute, it would all fall infinitely short of what he hath done for *us* in this inestimable Gift of his own Son. So that if this prove ineffectual, it is beyond the Power of an Omnipotent Bounty, to relieve *us*. For though God can do all Things that can be well and wisely done, and do not imply a Contradiction; yet this can be no Relief at all to *us*, who reject his Son, and refuse to be made happy in the gracious Method which he hath prescribed to *us*. For after this mighty Gift of his own Son, to save *us* according to the Method of his Gospel, there remains nothing more to be done for *us*, but either to save *us* whether we will, or no; or else to make *us* happy in our Sins, and save *us* notwithstanding our Continuance in them; the former of which can neither be well, nor wisely done; because by saving *us* against our Wills, he must deal with *us* in such a Way, as is repugnant to that Law of Liberty that is implanted in our Natures; and use *us* not as Free, but as Necessary Agents. And if considering all things, it was best and wisest that he should make *us* Free Agents, then it can neither be well, nor wise to govern

govern *us* as *Necessary* ones ; since by so doing, he must alter the Course of our Nature, and consequently, swerve and decline from what is *best* and *wisest* ; which would be to do Violence to the Perfection of his own Nature.

And then, as for the *latter*, he cannot do it ; because it implies a Contradiction. For to make Men happy in their *Sins*, is to make them happy in their *Miseries* ; Misery being as inseparable from Sin, as Heat is from Fire ; and as intimately related to it, as the Son is to the Father ; and consequently, he may as possibly make a Father without a Son, as a Sinner without *Misery*. When therefore God hath done all for us that can possibly be done ; and we, by our own *Obstinacy*, have rendered all ineffectual ; we are beyond the Power of Remedy, and must necessarily perish in our *Sins*. And when we have no other Hope to depend on, but this, that the All-wise God will undo *his own* Workmanship, and unravel our Nature, by governing us contrary to the most *wise* Constitution of it ; or that the All-powerful God will effect *Impossibilities* ; and do that for *us*, which is not an Object of Power ; how *deplorable* and *desperate* must our *Condition* be ? Wherefore, as you would not run your selves beyond the Reach of all Mercy, and excommunicate *your own* Souls from all Hope of Salvation, be now at last persuaded to comply with Christ's Coming ; which was to reduce you from the Error of your *Ways*, and to bring you to a *serious Repentance*.

DIS-

DISCOURSE XVIII.

UPON

JOHN iii. 16.

— *That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.*

IN these Words you have the Love of God measured by a *twofold* Standard : *First*, By the Greatness of the Gift which he hath bestowed upon the World, *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son* : *Secondly*, By the blessed End, for which he did bestow him, *that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, &c.*

The First of these I have already gone through ; and now I shall proceed to the Second, *viz.* The blessed End for which *he gave his only begotten Son, That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.*

In which Words you have also Two very great Instances of God's infinite Love and good Will to Mankind.

The First is, his imposing upon us such a *gentle, and easie, and merciful* Condition, *That whosoever believeth in him.*

2dly, His proposing such a *great Reward* to us, upon our performing of this Condition.

I begin with the First, *viz.* His imposing upon us such a *gentle, and easie, and merciful* Condition, *That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish.* In the Management of which, I shall do these Two Things :

1. Shew you what it is that is included in this Condition, *Whosoever believeth in him.*

2. How good God hath been to us, in making the Condition which he hath imposed upon us, so *gentle and merciful.*

1. What is it that is included in this Condition ? To which I answer in general, That *believing in Christ*, doth not only denote a naked Assent to the Truth of this Proposition, *That he is the Son of God*, and the Messenger of God's Mind and Will to the World, and the Saviour of Mankind ; but that it also includes, whatsoever is naturally consequent thereunto. For thus it is very ordinary with the Scripture, to express the *natural Effects and Consequents* of Things by their Causes and Principles. This is the *Love of God*, from the Apostle, *that we keep his Commandments*, 1 Joh 5. 3. Whereas in strictness of speaking, our keeping his Commandments is only the Effect or Consequence of our loving him. So Prov. 8. 13. *The Fear of the Lord is to hate Evil* : Whereas indeed, this is only the Effect or Consequence of the Fear of the Lord. Thus by *hearing*, and *hearing*, and *remembering* of God, the Scripture usually expresses the consequent Effects of them. Thus Acts 22. 14. *The God of our Fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his Will* ; that is, that thou

thou mayst not only know it, but by thy Knowledge mayst be suitably affected with it (for 'twas not to a bare Contemplative Knowledge that St. Paul was chosen:) And then it follows, *and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the Voice of his Mouth*; that is, that hearing the Voice of his Mouth, thou shouldest thereby be induced to obey it: For he was not merely to hear Christ speaking to him out of the Heavens; but that hearing him, he might submit to his Will, and become his Apostle to the World. Many other Places I might easily give you, where the *natural Effects* and *Consequents* are in Scripture expressed by their *Causes* and *Principles*. And thus also Faith or Believing, whensoever it is used in Scripture to signify the Condition of the Gospel Covenant, always implies its *natural Effects* and *Consequents*, that is, sincere and universal Obedience to those *Rules* of Holy Living which the Gospel prescribes: For *this* is the most natural Effect of our believing in Jesus Christ. And hence it is called the *Obedience of Faith*, Rom. 16. 26 that is, the Obedience which *springs* from Faith, as from its Cause and Principle. And accordingly, Rom. 16. 16. you find, that to Believe and Obey the Gospel, signifies one and the same thing. *But they have not all obeyed the Gospel, saith he: For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our Report?* that is, who hath believed, so as to obey it? So that wheresoever Faith is mentioned singly as the Condition of the Gospel-Covenant, it is apparent, it must be understood in the largest Sense, as comprehending that Obedience which is the Effect and Consequence of it. So 1 John 5. 1. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God*; that is, whosoever so believes the Truth of *this* Proposition, as to profess upon it, and govern his Life and Actions according to the Tenour and Direction of it, is truly a Child of God. For he who believes Christ to be the *Messias*, but continues obstinately disobedient to his Laws, is so far from being truly and really a Child of God, that he thereby becomes ten times more a Child of the Devil: For, saith the Apostle, *If I have all Faith, and have not Charity, I am nothing*. And Gal. 5. 6. *For in Jesus Christ neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision; but Love which worketh by Love*. And if so, then Faith it self is nothing, abstracted from this blessed Effect of it, i. e. *working by Love*: For in Gal. 6. 15. he tells us, that *Circumcision is nothing*; but the new Creature: By which new Creature he means an excellent Temper and Disposition of Mind; as he plainly tells us, 1 Cor. 7. 19. *Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the Commandments of God*. So that by these different Variations, of Expression, it is apparent, that by Faith, as significant in the Account of Christ, he always means a *working Faith*, the Effect of which is the new Creature, or *keeping the Commandments of God*.

And so I have done with the first Thing proposed: which was to shew you what is included in *this* Condition, *whosoever believeth in him*: which, you see, is not to be confined to a bare and naked Belief of him; but must be extended further, even to that whole Course of Obedience, which is the natural Effect of such a Belief. So that, Whosoever believes in him, is as much as if he had said, *Whosoever so believes in him, as sincerely and universally truely him*.

* 2. I proceed now to the next Thing; which was, to shew you how good God hath been to us, in making the Condition which he hath imposed upon us, so gentle and merciful: And this will appear, if we consider these four Things.

1. That he hath put nothing in *this* Condition, but what is in its own Nature exceeding good for us.
2. That he hath most mercifully proportioned the Whole, to the present State and Circumstances of our Nature.
3. That he hath rendred the Whole almost necessarily consequent to our believing in Jesus Christ.
4. That to beget that Belief in us, he hath given us the most plain and convincing Evidence.
5. That to render this Belief Operative, he hath engaged himself to assist, actuate and enliven it, by his own immediate Concurrence.

1. That

1. That God hath put nothing into *this* Condition, but what is in its *own* Nature exceeding good for us. For there is no Precept in all the Gospel, but what contains either some *effectual* Means, or *apparent* Instance of what is *morally* and *eternally* Good; and whatsoever is *morally* good, is *naturally* so. For the moral Goodness of Things consists in the Fitness and Reasonableness of them; and that which is the *moral* Good, or Duty of Men, consists in doing that which is eternally *fit* and *reasonable* for them, considering the Frame and Circumstances of their Natures, and the *different* Relations wherein they are placed in the World.

But now, for Men to do what is eternally *fit* and *reasonable*, is naturally good for, and *beneficial* to themselves; because by so doing, they *perfect* and *advance* their Natures, and accomplish their own Satisfaction and Happiness. For our Reason being that *proper* Character of our Natures, that distinguishes us from all *sublunary* Beings, and sets us in a Form of Being above them; the Perfection of our Nature must necessarily consist in being perfectly *reasonable*; in having our *Understandings* informed with the Principles of *right* Reason, and our *Wills* and *Affections* regulated by them: And when once we are released from the Slaveries of Sense and Passion, and all our Powers are so perfectly subdued to this *superior* Principle of Reason, as to do every Thing that it *commands*, and nothing that it *forbids*; and we *chuse* and *refuse*, and *love*, and *hate*, and *hope*, and *fear*, and *delight*, according as *right* Reason directs and dictates; then, and not till then, we are come to the full Stature of perfect Men in Christ Jesus. Now, all the Duty of the Gospel being a *reasonable* Service, as the Apostle calls it, *Rom. 12. 1.* the End and Tendency of it must be, to *habituate* us to live according to the Laws of *right* Reason; which is all one, as to advance us to the Perfection of *reasonable* Beings; and being once arrived at *this*, we shall find *unspeakable* Satisfaction from within our selves, and feel a *Heaven* of Joys springing up within *our own* Bosoms. For when once our *disjoynted* Powers are set in Order, and all our *Faculties* reduced to their *natural* Subordination, our Nature will be in perfect Rest and Ease; being freed from that *unnatural* Violence and Oppression under which it now groans; and cured of all those *Spasms* and *Convulsions* of Mind, which are the *inseparable* Effects of its Lapse and Degeneracy. And all the Motions of our Wills and Affections being regulated by the *eternal* Reason of our Minds, with what *delightful* Relishes, and *sweet* Gusts of Pleasure, shall we taste and review *our own* Actions; they being always such as our *best* and *purest* Reason doth approve of with a *full* and *ungainsaying* Judgment? So that God's Commands, you see, being all of them most *reasonable* must necessarily tend to the Perfection and Happiness of our Nature; besides, that they generally promote even our *sensitive* Happiness, our *Pleasure*, and *Profit*, and *Reputation* in *this* World. Now, what a most *endearing* Instance is this of God's Goodness towards us, that he should make our Benefit the Measure of our Duty, and oblige us to nothing but what is for our good; that he should so far concern himself in our Happiness, as to impose it upon us, under the Penalty of his *severest* Displeasure, and to enforce his Laws with such *inviting*, and such *dreadful* Sanctions, only to secure us from running away from *our own* Mercies? So that to be a Christian, is, in Effect nothing else, but only to be obliged to be kind to our selves, and bound in Conscience to be happy. Good God! that thou shouldst be so infinitely Zealous of our Welfare, as to make the Means of it, the only Matter of thy Laws; and promise such *vast* Rewards, and denounce such *dreadful* Punishments against us, for no other Reason, but only to *affright* and *allure* us out of Misery into Happiness! That thou shouldst *hate* our Sins so implacably, only because they are our *irreconcilable* Enemies; and be so infinitely pleased with our Obedience, only because it leads to our *endless* Bliss and Perfection! And that it is thus, is so plain and apparent, that we cannot but acknowledge it a most convincing Instance of God's infinite Goodness towards us.

2. That God hath most mercifully proportioned *this* Condition, to the *present* State and Circumstances of our Nature. He saw very well, into what a *deplorable* Condition *Human* Nature was reduced ; how its Strength was *broken*, and its Health and Vigour *impair'd* and *decay'd*; how its Reason was *clouded*, and all its Faculties *depraved*; how apt it was to be *surprized*, and to act *unadvisedly*; sometimes for Want of *Time*, sometimes for Want of *Order* and *Distinction* in its Thoughts; how much it was *hindred* from acting regularly by *intervening* Accidents, and how it was *weakened* and *determined*, by the *bad* Habits and Necessities it had generally contracted : And seeing it reduced to this *sad* State, he hath most graciously accommodated its Burthen to its Strength ; and taken Measure of its Duty, by its Ability to discharge it. For though in his *Gospel* he requires, that we should *perfect Holiness in the Fear of God*, and *be perfect, as our Father in Heaven is perfect*; that is, that we should advance to the *utmost Degrees* and *Improvements* in Vertue, that our Natures are capable of ; yet he requires this of us under such *moderate Penalties*, as are no ways *destructive* to our *Eternal Happiness*; such as the hiding his Face from us, and other such like *paternal Severities* and *Castigations*; his correcting us with the Rod of *Temporal Judgments*, and abating us in the Degrees of our *future Happiness*, proportionably to our *moral Defects* and *Non-improvements*; which Penalties, though they are *sufficient* to *quicken* our Endeavours, and *excite* us still to a farther Progress from *one Degree* of Vertue, to *another*; yet are they not such as do excommunicate us from *Heaven*, or *dis-seize* us of the Reward of our *honest* and *sincere* Obedience. And indeed, should God have been *severe* in marking what we do amiss ; and exacted of us, under the Penalty of Damnation, the *utmost Degrees* and *Improvements* that are *possible* for us to attain, no *Flesh* would be saved ; it being *morally impossible* for us, in this *degenerate* State, to do always the *utmost Good*, or avoid the *utmost Evil* that we are able : And therefore, out of a *tender* Regard to the Weakness and Infirmary of our Nature, he hath only forbid those *Neglects* and *Miscarriages*, under this Declaration, that they are *inconsistent* with the Sincerity of our Submission and Obedience to him. But as for our *moral Defects*, and *Infirmities*, and *Surprizes*, though so far as it is in our Power to avoid them, they are truly Sins against the Law of Perfection, and as such, we ought to lament, and beg Pardon for them ; yet, Thanks be to a *merciful* God, we shall only be chastened for them here, that we may not be condemned with the *World*, as the *Apostle* Expresses it, 1 Cor. 11. 32. and reap *less Happiness* in the other World, for having sowed *less Degrees* of Good than we might, and ought to have done in *this* ; as the same *Apostle* in 2 Cor. 9. 6. 'Tis true indeed, as for *wilful* Sinners, he hath concluded them (as it is very reasonable he should) under the Sentence of *Eternal Death* : For should he let such go unpunished, he must e'en resign up his Government, and leave the *wretched* World in a State of *Anarchy* and Confusion : But yet to these he hath extended as much Kindness, as was possible for a *wise* and *gracious* Governour to do : For he hath not so irrecoverably concluded them under this *direful* Sentence, but that still he doth indulge to them the *saving* Remedy of Repentance ; having for the Sake of *Jesus*, and his *all-sufficient* Propitiation, bound himself by Promise, to pardon and receive into his Favour every *wilful* Sinner in the World, if he will but repent of what is *past*, and amend for the *future*. Thus, to save the *miserable* World, he hath gone to the *utmost* Borders of what is *fit* and *reasonable*, and done as much for us, as it was *possible* for the Justice and Rectitude of his Nature to admit of : For should he have proceeded any further, he must have pardoned *impenitent* Sinners ; which he could not have done, without allowing and encouraging their Rebellion : And to pardon an Offender that persists in his Fault, that is neither sorry for it, nor willing to amend it, is utterly *incongruous* to all *wise* Rules of Government ; and cannot be practised by any Government either *Divine* or *Human*, without endangering its own Foundations. What then is there beyond this, that we can modestly ask, or God wisely grant ? If *God* had summon'd us to his *Privy Council* in *Heaven*, and there promised to grant us any Terms of Salvation that we our selves could think fit to propose to him ; surely, the utmost that any modest

Man

Man could have asked, would have been only this; *Lord! Be but so merciful as to consider the Weakness and Infirmary of our Natures, so as not to cast us off for every Neglect or Miscarriage that was only possible for us to avoid: And if at any time we should be such Wretches, as knowingly and wilfully to offend thee, be but so gracious as to receive us again into thy Favour, whensoever we heartily repent and amend: This is the utmost that we can request at thy Hands, and for this we will praise thee on the bended Knees of our Souls, and adore thy Goodness for ever and ever.* Why now, all this he hath freely granted us of his own Accord: And is not this a most amazing Instance of his Goodness, that of his own free Motion he should thus indulge to us the utmost Mitigations that we could have modestly desired; and condescended so far to our Weakness, that without an unpardonable Impudence, we cannot desire him to condescend yet farther.

3. That he hath rendred the Performance of the whole Condition of our Salvation almost necessarily consequent to our believing in *Jesus Christ*: For in that Revelation of his Will which he hath made by *Jesus Christ*, he hath pressed the Performance of this Condition upon us with such irresistible Arguments, as must needs prevail wheresoever they are heartily believed and duly considered. What Man can be so stupid, as to trample upon Christ's Law, that firmly believes and considers those glorious Rewards it proposes to all that sincerely obey it? What Pleasures of Sin can seduce that Man from his Duty, who is firmly persuaded, that after a few Moments Obedience, he shall swim in Rivers of Pleasures that flow from God's right Hand for evermore? How can any Man have the Courage to violate the Laws of our Saviour, who heartily believes and considers those dreadful Punishments, which he hath denounced against the Transgressors of them? And what Evils or Miseries can scare that Man from his Duty, that is chained so fast to it by the Consideration of that Wrath of God which is revealed from Heaven against all Unrighteousness and Ungodliness of Men? How can any Man love his Sins any longer, that believes and reads that bloody Story of them, that is written in the Agony and Passion of the Son of God? When we consider, that he was delivered for our Offences, and that our Sins were the principal Actors of all that woful Tragedy; that they were these that betrayed, arraigned, and condemned him; that borrowed the Throats of a barbarous Rabble, to cry out *Crucifie him, Crucifie him*; that buffeted and scourged him with the Hands of the rude Soldiers; that gored his Sides with the Spear, rent his sacred Hands and Feet with the Nails that fastned him to the Cross: How can we believe, and consider, that our Sins did thus barbarously treat the best Friend we have in the World, without being all inflamed with Indignation against them? Again, how can we reflect upon the dreadful Displeasure God expressed against our Sins in this dismal Example of sacrificing his own Son for them, without being filled with Horror, and struck into a trembling Agony at the Thought of them? Once more, How can we be so desperately fool-hardy, as to go on in our Sins, if we believe, and consider the Article of the Day of Judgment, wherein we must give an Account of whatsoever we have done in the Flesh, whether it be good, or evil; and stand or fall to all Eternity, according as we have discharged or neglected this great Condition of our Salvation? These are such mighty Arguments, as (one would think) it were impossible for Men firmly to believe, and yet not be persuaded by them. Thus God in his Mercy and Goodness to us, hath furnished the Revelation of his Son with such prevalent Motives, that our believing in him almost necessarily draws after it the Performance of the whole Condition of our Salvation? For upon our believing in *Jesus*, and considering his Proposals, we are compassed round about with so many puissant Reasons to submit our selves to his Laws, as (one would think) all the Temptations of the Devil and the World are not able to resist. So careful hath God been to secure us from Sin and Misery, that knowing the Force of our natural Reason to be too weak to secure us, he hath sent us down these fresh Auxiliaries from Heaven; by whose Assistance, if we do but trust to, and employ them, we may easily repulse all the Temptations of Sin, and fight

our Way through all the Difficulties of our Duty. *For this is the Victory*, saith the Apostle, *by which we overcome the World, even our Faith*, 1 John 5. 4. Which Words are urged by him as an Instance of the Easiness and Gentleness of our Obedience to the Gospel, which is the Condition of our Salvation: For Ver. 3. saith he, *that is the Love of God that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous*. Well; but how doth this appear? Why, saith he, *for every one that is born of God, overcometh the World; and this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith*. For who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God, Ver. 5. So that he proves the Easiness of the Gospel-Commands by this Argument, that the keeping them depends upon that Faith, by which we believe Jesus to be the Son of God. By this Means therefore God hath mercifully rendred the Condition of our Salvation *easy* to us, by rendering the Performance of it so necessarily consequent to our believing in Jesus; in which, how good he hath been to us, will evidently appear, if we consider,

4. That to beget this Belief in us, he hath given us the most plain and convincing Evidence, viz. the Evidence of those *miraculous* Works wherewith he accompanied the Ministry of our Saviour and his Apostles, and sealed and confirmed it to the World; which of all Kinds of Evidence, is the most apt to convince, and persuade the World of the Truth of any Divine Revelation: For this Kind of Evidence appeals to Mens Senses; and is such an Argument, as they may see, and touch, and handle; and Men are generally apt to give more Credit to their own Senses, than to the clearest Inferences and Deductions of Reason.

And indeed, the Generality of Men are hardly capable of any other Notices of Things, but what are immediately impressed upon them by the Objects of their Sense: For they have not Skill enough to compare *simple* Terms so exactly with one another, as to compound them into true Propositions, and then to infer from every such Proposition its natural Consequents and Deductions. These are Things that require a great deal more Art and Leisure, than Mens Educations and Affairs will ordinarily afford them. But Miracles are Things that are obvious to Mens Senses; and from them to infer a Divine Commission in the Person that works them, is not only possible, but very easy to the most vulgar Understanding. For Miracles being the Visible Effects of a Divine Power, cannot be supposed to be wrought by any, but Persons that are divinely commissioned; and he that shews me an immediate Effect of God's Power, gives me that, in Token that he came from God. So that the Argument of Miracles, you see, is the most plain and intelligible of all others; and as it is so, it is the most powerful to convince and persuade Men. For whereas had our Saviour proved his Doctrines in a Way of rational Discourse and Inference, he must have proved them all singly and apart, by distinct and different Arguments; which would have been so tedious, that the Vulgar would never have leisure enough to attend them, nor yet Capacity enough to retain them: But by this Argument of Miracles he proved them all at once, because his Miracles were a Token that the God of Truth did approve his Doctrine: And it cannot be supposed, that the God of Truth would have so visibly approved of his Doctrine in the Gross, had any Part or Proposition of it been false and erroneous.

Thus God out of his infinite Goodness, hath not only revealed his everlasting Gospel to us; but hath also taken the most effectual Course to convince and persuade us of the Truth of it. He hath set his own Almighty Power at Work to still the Seas, and raise the Dead; to cure the Blind, and Lame, and Diseased, to change and vary the Course and Order of his Creation; and all this for no other Purpose, but to persuade Mankind of the Truth of those glad Tidings which he revealed from Heaven to them by his own Son. And as he hath given us the best Evidences to convince us of the Truth of his Gospel; so he hath taken the most effectual Course to continue and perpetuate it to the World.

For

For *first*, he raised up *sundry Eye-witnesses* who conversed with our Saviour, and beheld his *Miracles*; and after they had seen him *risen from the Dead*, and *ascended up into Heaven*, did openly publish and testify them to the World, and finally confirmed and ratified their Testimony by laying down their Lives for it: Which was as *high* a Confirmation, as could possibly have been given of the Truth of it. But lest after all, the World should suspect them, God also furnished them with the Gift of *Miracles*, and continued that Gift as an *Heirloom* to their Successors for *Three Hundred Years* together; that, as the Testimony of the *first Eye-witnesses* was confirmed, not only by their *Martyrdoms*, but by their *Miracles* also; so it might still be handed down from them through the *successive* Generations in the same *infallible* Manner, till it was spread over all the World, and needed no farther *Martyrdoms*, or *Miracles* to confirm it.

O *blessed God*! What care hast thou taken, *first* to provide, and then to secure the Evidences of our *Holy Religion*, that all Generations might have *sufficient* Motives of Credibility; and that Mankind might still have abundant Reason to believe in thy *Son* to the End of the World, when they shall see him come down from *Heaven* to Judgment? How *easie* therefore hath God rendered the Condition of our Salvation to us, when he hath not only rendered the Performance of it so necessarily *consequent* to our *believing in Jesus*; but also to beget this *Belief* in us, hath given us such abundant Evidence? How can we sufficiently admire and adore his Goodness, that hath been so *infinitely* solicitous to secure our Happiness; and hath so contrived Things, that we cannot heartily believe his *Gospel*, and not be persuaded by it to comply with the Terms of our Salvation; nor yet impartially consider the Evidence of his *Gospel*, and not heartily believe it? And yet, as if all this were not enough,

5. And Lastly, To render this Belief *operative* and *effectual*, he hath engaged himself to *assist*, *actuate*, and *enliven* it by his own *immediate* Concurrence. Provided we use our own *honest* Endeavour, he hath assured us *again* and *again*, that *he will give his Holy Spirit to every one that asks*; that *he will work in us to will and to do*, if we will but take care to *work out our own Salvation with Fear and Trembling*; and that *to him that hath*, i. e. makes an honest Improvement of that Strength that he hath, *it shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly*. So that though, one would have thought, he had done sufficiently for us before, in giving us such *abundant* Evidence to beget in us a hearty Belief of his *Gospel*, and such prevalent Motives to persuade us to submit to it, and comply with his *gracious* Proposals: Yet such was his Goodness to us, such his *importunate* Care of our Welfare, that he could not stop here, nor think he had done enough for us, till by an *irrepealable* Promise he had obliged himself to us to *co-operate* with us, and by the *immediate* Influences of his Grace, to bless and succeed our *honest* Endeavours. So that we can no sooner attempt *our own* Restauration, no sooner set our selves in the way to our Happiness; but the *Good God* is immediately *present* with us, exciting our *Faith*, fixing our *Consideration*, animating and encouraging our *poor Endeavours*, and supplying us with all manner of Grace and Assistance that our State and Necessities require. Nay, and many and many a Time, while we are Sleeping on in our *wretched sinful* Security, he comes in Pity to visit us, and ever and anon suggests good Thoughts to our Minds, to rouse and awake us out of those *fatal* Slumbers, to enliven our *Faith*, and call up our *Consideration*; nay, and oftentimes he doth so *urge*, and *second*, and *repeat* those Thoughts to us, that by being so haunted with their Importunities, we are forced to fix our Minds on them, whether we will or no. And though we, like *ungrateful* Wretches, do many times stifle his good Motions, and turn a *deaf* Ear to his Calls and *gracious* Invitations to Happiness; yet doth he not presently give over; but whilst we are running away from him, we hear a Voice behind us, calling after us to return; and though we *still* run on; yet *still* he follows us with his Importunities through the *whole* Course of our *sinful* Life, till either he hath brought us back, or we have run our selves past all Hope of Recovery.

These

These are Things, I dare say, that every Man in the World, one time or other, hath had Experience of. And is not this a strange Condescension of Goodness, to see the God of Heaven and Earth thus Courting and Wooing a Company of Impotent Rebels, to lay down their Arms, and accept his Grace, and his Everlasting Preferments? And though they reject his Motions, and stop their Ears to those *still Whispers* of his, that secretly invade their Souls; yet to consider how he still *solicites* and *importunes* them, as if he would take no Denial, and had resolved not to let them alone, till he had persuaded them to be happy; O Good God! What prodigious Stories of Love are these? What strange amazing Condescensions to thy *wretched undeserving Creatures*!

And now, after all this, what can the *Lord our God* do more for us, that is consistent, either with his own Wisdom, or with the Freedom of our Natures? He hath done all that can be done, to draw us to Heaven; and if that will not do, it is by no means fit that he should drag us thither; since it would be a most unreasonable Condescension in him to force us to be Happy, when we are unwilling to accept it; and to prostitute the Reward of Piety and Vertue to those that scorn and reject it.

And now to conclude this Argument; from hence I infer, how monstrously Ungrateful those Persons are, who complain of the Difficulty and Burthensomeness of this Gentle and Merciful Condition of our Salvation: When in so many Instances it is apparent, how *merciful* God hath been, in imposing such a Condition upon us.

In the Name of God, what would you have, Sirs? Would you have Heaven drop into your Mouths, while you lie still and do nothing? Or, can you think, it is fit, that so vast a Reward should be prostituted to the lazy Wishes of such *Drones* and *Sluggards*, as do not think it worth the labouring for? That those Golden *Fruits* should hang down from Heaven to us on an over-laden Bough, to be cropt by every idle wanton Hand, that will stretch forth it self to take and eat it? Surely, no Reasonable Creature can be so senseless, as to entertain such a *wild and fond* Conceit. Well then, would you have God admit of such a Condition of Salvation, as includes in it a Licence to enjoy your *Lusts*, and gives you Liberty to be as wicked as you please? But alas! if God should be so fond of your Salvation, as to offer Violence to his own Nature and Government, by yielding to your *Sins*, and granting you a free Dispensation to enjoy 'em; yet it is impossible in the Nature of the Thing; because your Salvation will not consist with it. For to be saved from Misery whilst we are let alone to enjoy our *Sins*, is a Contradiction; and so not the Object of any Power, no, not of *Omnipotence* it self. For Sin it self is the greatest Misery that Human Nature is liable to: 'Tis *this* that convulses all its *Faculties*; that racks and stretches them out of Joint, and distorts them into an unnatural Figure: 'Tis *this* that makes us our own Reverse, transposes our *Head* with our *Feet*, and makes our *Reason* truckle to our *Sense*; our *intellectual Faculties* that were made to govern, to serve those *Brutish Passions* and *Appetites*, which Nature designed to be their *Vassals*: Which is such a *barbarous Violence* to the very Frame and Constitution of our Nature, as will, whensoever we recover out of our Lethargick Stupidity, be as sensibly *dolorous* to our Souls, as *Racks*, or *Wheels*, or *Catastrophes*, to our Bodies. So that for God to save us from Misery, whilst he *suffers* us to continue in our *Sins*, is altogether as impossible, as it is to save us from Burning, whilst he *suffers* us to continue weltring in the *Flames of Fire*: And to make us *well* in *Sickness*, or *easie* in *Diseases*, are not more repugnant to the Nature of Things, than 'tis to make us *happy* in our *Sins*: And yet *this* is the only Matter we complain of, that God will not allow us a *Free Dispensation* to be wicked, in that which is the Condition of our Salvation.

O Blessed God! How is it possible, thou shouldest ever please such Froward, Peevish and Ungrateful Creatures; who will never be satisfied, unless thou performest Impossibilities, and makest Contradictions to be true for their sakes? For shame therefore, let us no longer complain, that the Condition of our Salvation is *too hard* and *rigorous*: But since God hath been pleased to condescend so low to us, as to indulge whatsoever is consistent with our Salvation; let us Admire and Adore his Goodness; and with our Souls inflamed with Love and Gratitude to him, chearfully undertake what he hath so mercifully enjoyed us.

DIS-

DISCOURSE XIX.

UPON

JOHN iii. 16.

----- *That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.*

I Am now upon the latter Part of this Text, *that whosoever believeth in him, &c.* In which there are *two great Instances* of God's Goodness to us.

First, His imposing upon *us* such a gentle and merciful Condition, *that whosoever believeth in him.*

Secondly, His proposing to us so vast a Reward upon the Performance of it; *should not perish, but have everlasting Life.*

The First of these I have handled already; and now I proceed to the Second, *viz.* the vast Reward he hath proposed to *us* upon the Performance of this *merciful Condition.* And in this you have,

First, The Negative Part of it, *that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish.*
Secondly, the Positive one, *but have everlasting Life.*

1. I begin with the First of these, *That whosoever believeth in him, might not perish.*

In Prosecution of which Argument, I shall do these Three Things:

1. Shew you what is meant by *perishing* here.
2. By what Right we were concerned in, and obliged to it.
3. What unspeakable Goodness God hath discover'd to *us*, in freeing and absolving *us* from *this* Obligation.

1. What is meant by *perishing* here, or not perishing? *That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish*; that is, that whosoever believes in him, might be pardoned, or absolved from the Obligation of *perishing* for ever, to which his Sins have rendered him justly liable. For that by this Phrase *μὴ ἀπολῆται*, *he should not perish*, or be destroyed, is not meant the *Annihilation* or Destruction of our Beings, as the *Socinians* and some others imagine, is evident, by its being opposed to *everlasting Life*; which, as I shall shew you hereafter, doth not denote our mere Continuance in Life and Being *for ever*; but our Continuance in a most *blissful* and *happy* Life for ever: And consequently, the Destruction that is here opposed to it, must not denote our *eternal* Discontinuance to *be* and live; but our living most *wretchedly* and *miserably* for ever. And indeed, wheresoever *Death* or *Destruction* is spoken of, in opposition to *eternal* Life, this is apparently the Sense of it. So *Rom. 6. 23. The Wages of Sin is Death, but the Gift of God is eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Now, that by *Death* here is understood a State of endless Misery and Suffering, in opposition to that State of endless Happiness, which eternal Life

Life implies, is evident ; because he cannot mean the *first Death*, which consists in the Separation of the Soul from the Body : For though *this* were originally the *Wages* of Sin, yet in it self, it is not so now ; but the *necessary* Condition of our Nature ; or whether we sin or no, we must undergo it, being obliged to it by the *irreversible* Decree of our Maker. But the *Death* here spoken of, is the Effect of our own *personal* Sin, without which we are not liable to it, as you may plainly see, *Ver. 21. What Fruit had ye in those Things*, (i. e. those Sins) *whereof ye are now ashamed* : For the *End* of those Things, or Sins, is *Death*.

Wherefore, since it cannot be meant of the *first*, it must be meant of the *second Death*, which St. John makes mention of *Rev. 2. 11. He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second Death*. And what that is, the same Author tells you, *Rev. 20. 14. And Death and Hell were cast into the Lake of Fire* : This is the *second Death* ; that is, this *Lake of Fire*, or the Torments and Miseries which *condemned Sinners* endure in it, is the *second Death* : For so he explains himself, *Ver. 10. And the Devil that deceived them, was cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, where the Beast and the false Prophet are, and shall be tormented Day and Night for ever and ever*. And this is that *Death* which is opposed to the *immortal Rewards* of the *Blessed*, as you may see *Rev. 21. 7, 8. He that overcometh, shall inherit all things* ; that is, all those *immortal Recompences* which God has prepared for virtuous Souls. But the *Fearful and Unbelieving, &c.* shall have their Part in the *Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone* : Which is the *second Death*.

And as *Death*, when opposed to *Eternal Life*, denotes a State of *endless* and *continued* Misery ; so doth *Destruction* also. So *Mat. 7. 13, 14. Broad is the Way that leadeth to Destruction. Narrow is the Way which leadeth unto Life* : By the latter of which, it is granted on all hands, he means *Life eternal* ; and that by *Destruction*, he means a State of *endless* Misery, is evident from *Mat. 10. 28. but fear him which is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell* : Which, according to St. John's Exposition, *Rev. 20. 10. is to torment them Day and Night for ever and ever*. And this *destroying in Hell*, our Saviour elsewhere expresses, by *casting into Hell, into the Fire that never shall be quenched ; where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched* : Which is as plain a Description of an *endless* State of Misery, as Words can express : For how is it possible that *Annihilation* should signify either a Fire that never goes out, or a Worm that never dies : So also *2 Thess. 1. 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord* ; meaning the *wicked Persecutors*, at *Christ's* Coming to Judgment. Now, that by that *everlasting Destruction*, he means a State of *endless* Suffering and Torment, is evident, if we consider the Description which our Saviour gives of that Punishment to which the Wicked shall be sentenced at the *last Day* ; *Go ye Cursed, saith he, into everlasting Fire, Matth 25. 41*. And lest we should fancy, that 'tis the Fire only that is *eternal*, but not the Punishment ; *Ver. 46. of that Chap. And these, saith he, shall go away into everlasting Punishment : But the Righteous into Life eternal*. And that they do actually exist in this Fire, and continue in the Torment of it, is evident by those Actions that are therein attributed to them ; such as *Weeping, and Wailing, and Gnashing of Teeth*, *Matth. 13. 42, 50*. Which Actions are plain Indications, not only of their subsisting in this *everlasting Fire* ; but of the *extream* Horror and Anguish they shall therein endure. And as this Fire is said to be *everlasting* ; so the *Everlastingness* of it is described so as to exclude all Limits, and prescind from all Determinations. For Fire must be extinguished ere it can cease to burn ; and therefore that which cannot be extinguished, can never end ; But such is that Fire whereunto the *Wicked* are condemn'd at the *Day of Judgment* ; so *Matth. 3. 12. Whose Fan is in his Hand ;-- but he will burn up the Chaff with unquenchable Fire*. And that the Sufferers shall be no more *extinguished*, than the Fire that burns them, is evident from *Rev. 14. 11. And the Smoke of their Torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. And they have no Rest Day nor Night*. And how can the *Smoke* of this Fire be said to be the *Smoke* of their Torment ascending

up for ever and ever, unless they exist in it for ever and ever; especially, considering what follows immediately after, *they have no Rest Day nor Night*? Which Expression is the same with that by which the same Author signifies the eternal Happiness of good Men: So Rev. 4. 8. *They rest not Day and Night, saying, holy, holy, holy*; and Rev. 7. 15. *They are before the Throne of God, and serve him Day and Night in his Temple*. And if *Day and Night* here, when applied to the State of Heaven, denotes the continued *blissful* Employment of the *happy* Souls there for ever; then, for the same Reason, when 'tis applied to the State of *Hell*, it must denote the continued Miseries of the *Damned* there for ever. Well then, if the Fire of *Hell* be everlasting; yea, if it be so absolutely everlasting, as that it is *unquenchable*; and if those that are cast into it, shall be tormented for ever and ever, all which the *Scripture* doth directly teach; then it necessarily follows, that the *Wicked* must subsist in their Miseries for ever, and be *co-eternal* with the Flames that Torment them. The Reason therefore why that future Punishment to which our Sins do consign and oblige us, is called by the Name of *Destruction, Perdition, and Death*; is not because it puts a *final* Period either to our Being or Subsistence, as some fondly Dream; but because it forever separates and disjoins us from God, who is the *better* and the *nobler* Life of Man; and from all those *sweet* Perceptions of Comfort and Pleasure, of which Life is the Principle. And there is no *Language, Phrases, or Expressions* can be supposed to *patronize* a contrary Opinion; since the same *Scriptures*, which say, that the *Wicked* shall be *destroyed, and perish, and die*, say also, that they shall be tormented with never-dying Pains, as they plainly and frequently do. This I have the longer insisted upon; because it is a very *dangerous* Thing for Men to be deceived in this Matter; not to know the worst of the Consequents of their own Follies; but to expect an *easier* and a *shorter* Hell than ever they are like to find. And so I have done with the first Thing, proposed, *viz.* What is here meant by perishing; and proved to you at large, that hereby is meant, living miserably for ever.

2. I proceed now to the next Thing proposed, *viz.* How we came to be concerned in, and obliged to this dreadful Penalty? To which I answer, that originally, we were hereunto obliged by the Law of our Nature: For Man being naturally an *immortal* Creature, must necessarily be for ever liable to the *natural* Effects of his own *Actions*: And therefore, since Misery is the *natural* Effect of *sinful Actions*, if we continue Sinners for ever, we must necessarily continue *miserable* for ever: And if God should have inflicted no *other* Miseries upon *wicked* Souls, when they are separated from their Bodies, than what are necessarily consequent to their own Wickedness, these would be an Hell of *insufferable* Torment to them. So that from the very *Immortality* of our Natures, we are *capable* of Everlasting Perseverance in Sin; and from our Everlasting Perseverance in Sin, we are fatally *damned* to Everlasting Misery. And as by the Law of our Natures, we are thus bound over to *Eternal* Punishment; so are we also by the positive Sentence and Determination of God; who hath not only obliged us to obey him, under the Penalty of enduring for ever the Miseries that are naturally *appendent* to our Sins; but hath added thereunto, all those positive Torments which the Lake of *Fire* and *Brimstone*, and the Horrors of the *outer* Darknes do imply: For so in his *Word* he hath plainly declared to us, that if after he hath tried us to the utmost, we will not be reclaimed; but are so *desperate* as to proceed in our Wickedness, *maugre* all the Arts and Methods he can use to reduce us; he will at last shut us up in a State of Endless and Irreversible Torment. And this is no more than what he might very justly and rightfully do: For he being the *supream* Law-giver of the World, hath an *immutable* Right to enforce his Laws with such Penalties as are *sufficient* to secure them from being violated by his Subjects: For otherwise he would be Defective in his *Power* of *Legislation*: For how could he have *sufficient* Power to make Laws, if he had not Right to enforce them with *sufficient* Penalties? But we that are his Subjects, being *apt* to offend, and so extremely *liable* to Temptations thereunto, no *less* Penalty could be sufficient to secure our Obedience, than that which is *Eternal*: For which Reason he hath enforced his Laws with the

the Threatning of it. And if God thought no *less* than the Threatning of *Eternal Punishment*, necessary to deter Men from their Sins; what *less* than the Execution of that Threat, can be sufficient to render them Examples of his Severity against it? For Threats without Execution, are but *mere* Scare-crows; and it is highly *unreasonable* for us to be afraid of any Threat, which we have Reason to conclude, shall never be executed upon us. Wherefore, since the *Sovereign Lord* and Governour of the World, hath in himself, an unalienable Right to enforce his own Laws by what Penalties he pleases; and since to enforce them in the *highest Degree*, he hath established them under the Penalty of *Eternal Torment*; it is no *less reasonable* for him to execute this Penalty, than it is to threaten and denounce it; otherwise his Threats will be altogether *insignificant*. For the End of *Legal Threats*, is to terrifie the Subject from Disobedience: But since we are assured, that God will do nothing but what is *just* and *reasonable*; why should we be terrified at any Threats of his, which he cannot as reasonably inflict, as denounce against us? Nor is it any Blemish to the Divine Goodness, that he hath threatned such an heavy Punishment against those that transgress his Laws: For since he hath enjoyed us nothing but what is for our *good*, and tends to our Happiness; and since the End of his Threats, is to oblige us to observe his Injunctions; it hence necessarily follows, that the more terrible his Threatnings are, the more he obliges us by them to pursue our own Happiness. And certainly, for God to lay his Creatures under the *strongest* Obligations to be *happy*, is so far from being a Blemish to his Goodness, that it is a most *glorious* Expression of it: And if we will be so obstinate, as to incur that *direful* Penalty, under which he hath obliged us to be *happy*, it is but *just* and *reasonable*, that he should inflict it upon us, and make us feel for ever the *rueful* Effects of *our own* Folly and Madness. Wherefore since we had all broken his Laws, and wilfully rendred our selves *guilty* before him; we therefore became most justly *obnoxious* to this most dreadful Penalty of *perishing* for ever. And thus you see, by what Right we were concerned in, and obliged to *this* Penalty.

3. I now proceed, to the *third*, and Last thing proposed; which is to shew you the *unspeakable* Goodness that God hath expressed to us in that Way and Method which he hath prescribed, to release us from this Obligation of *perishing* for ever. For the Way and Method prescribed by him, is this, to send his own most *blessed Son* to suffer in our stead; that so we repenting of our Sins, and forsaking them, might upon the Account of his Sufferings, be released from this Obligation to *Eternal Punishment*. And hence *Christ* is said to *put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself*, Heb. 9. 26. that is, to make Expiation for it, even as the *Jewish High Priest* did by those Sacrifices which he offered. And accordingly, Col. 1. 14. it is said, that *in him we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins*; that is, upon Condition, we heartily and sincerely repent of them. For, *if we walk in the Light*, saith the Apostle, *as he is in the Light*; that is, if we forsake our Sins, and become *pure* as he is *pure*, and *holy* as he is *holy*; we have Fellowship one with another; and the Blood of *Jesus Christ* cleanseth us from all Sin. This therefore being the Way and Method which God hath prescribed to release us from the Obligation to *Eternal Punishment*, what an *unspeakable* Love and Goodness he hath herein expressed to us, will evidently appear in the Consideration of these four Things:

1. His *admitting* of another to suffer in our Stead.
2. His *exacting* such a Suffering for the Price of our Pardon, as was most *effectual* to secure us from sinning again.
3. His *consenting* that his own *Son* should submit to *this* Suffering.
4. His *choosing* to grant Pardon to us upon his Suffering, as a *Sacrifice* for our Sins.

1. One very great Instance of God's Love and Goodness to *us* in *this* Method of Pardon, is his admitting of *another* to suffer in *our* stead. Had he been pleased, he might have exacted the Punishment of the *Criminals*, and made the *Offenders* smart for ever in their *own Persons*; yea, and *this* he might have justly done, notwithstanding the best Reason they could render him to the contrary. For the best Reason a Sinner can render, why he should not be punished, is his *heartly Repentance*: For next to being perfectly innocent, the best Thing we can do, is to reform when we have done *amiss*; but yet *this* doth not at all diminish the Guilt and Demerit of our *past Transgressions*. For Repentance doth not all alter the Nature of the Act, nor make it *less* evil, nor *less* deserving of Punishment: And therefore, since the Act it self obliges *us* to Punishment, our Repentance of it doth no ways cancel the Obligation. 'Tis true, God might, if he had pleased, have pardoned *us* upon our Repentance, without any other Reason or Motive: But it is certain, that Repentance is not a sufficient Reason to move him to declare a Promise of Pardon to a sinful World; it being no way consistent with the Safety, either of Divine or Human Governments, so far to encourage *Offenders*, as to indemnify them universally by a publick and standing Declaration, merely upon their Future Repentance and Amendment; because by such a Declaration, they must let loose the Reins to all manner of *Licentiousness*. For if Subjects are now so prone to *transgress*, when they have so much Reason to expect a severe Punishment for it; how much more prone would they be, were their Governours so easie, as to assure them beforehand, that the Punishment due to their *Crimes*, should be immediately remitted upon their unfeigned Repentance? Wherefore, since our Repentance is no sufficient Reason to oblige God to pardon *us*, and much less to move him to make a Promise of Pardon to *us*; and since *this* is the best Reason that we can offer in our Behalf, to move him thereunto, it hence necessarily follows, that if he had pleased, when once we had broken his *Laws*, he might have justly executed upon us that Eternal Punishment which he had threatened, notwithstanding all we could have done to move him to the contrary.

But such is his inexpressible *Goodness* towards *us*, that to put himself into a Capacity of pardoning *penitent Sinners* with safety to his Government, and of making a publick Grant of Pardon and Indemnity to them, thereby to encourage them to repent; he hath graciously admitted another Person to suffer in our stead; that so neither their Persons might be ruined, nor yet their Sins be unpunished; and that he might sufficiently *express* to them his Severity against their *Sins*, without exposing them to the *Eternal Smart* of it. For though the Suffering of this Person, as I shall shew you by and by, was a sufficient Reason to move God to forgive *us*, upon our unfeigned Repentance; yet it was no such Reason, as did necessarily oblige him thereunto: For if he had pleased, he might have righteously exacted our Punishment at our own Hands, and made us for ever rue for our own Folly and Mad-ness. But such was his Goodness towards *us*, that for the Sufferings of the Innocent, he hath mercifully acquitted the Punishment due to *Offenders*; and so scourged our Sins upon the Back of our *Saviour*: For though he suffered for *us*, yet we suffered not in him; our Persons were not at all damaged by those *bitter Agonies* which he endured for our *Sins*: So that, to a Wonder of Mercy, they have been so severely punished, as 'tis fit they should; and yet, we, who were the Authors of them, never felt the Smart. *Blessed God!* How merciful hast thou been to thy Creatures, that hast thus found out a Way to distinguish the Sin from the Sinner; and so to punish the one, as to let the other escape! For by this *gracious Admission*, *Christ hath once suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God*, 1 Pet. 3. 18.

2. Another Instance of God's Love and Goodness to *us* in *this* Method of Pardon, is, his exacting such a Suffering for the Price of our Pardon, as is most effectual to secure us from sinning again; which is a plain Instance of the mighty Care he hath taken to pardon *us*, in such a Way as might be most for our Future Security. For it would have been no way proper, for the wise Governour of the World

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to grant a general Pardon to *Offenders*, without some sufficient Reason moving him thereunto. Now, that Repentance, which is the best Reason we can offer him, is not sufficient to secure his Government; in the good Management whereof the Welfare of all his Subjects is involved. For his Laws requiring nothing but what is for our good, 'tis truly our Interest to be kept under a strict Obedience to them: So that should he pardon *us* upon any Reason that is not sufficient to secure his Government, and our Obedience, it would be a publick Nuisance and Damage to Mankind; and consequently, the greater the Reason is, that moves him to pardon what is past; and the more it enforces our Obedience for the future, the greater is the Goodness which he expresses in pardoning us, and the more it conduces to our Welfare and Happiness. But now, upon what higher Motive could he have made a Grant of Pardon to us, than upon the most *meritorious* *Sufferings* of his own Son for *us*? For since nothing that we could do, was a sufficient Reason to move him to promise to us the *Forgiveness of our Sins*, it was requisite that *something more* should be done for *us*, by *some other Person*; and the greatest Thing that any other Person could do for *us*, to move God to forgive us, was to suffer in *our* stead; because hereby, not only a publick Acknowledgment is made, of what we have deserved for *our Sins*; but something of the Punishment due to them, is paid as a publick Satisfaction to the Law. So that if God pardons *us* upon such a Reason, he doth by the same Act express his most tender Mercy to *us*, and his implacable Severity against *our Sins*: For by pardoning *us* upon the *Sufferings* of another in *our* stead, he expresses his hearty good Will to *us*; and openly signifies, how unwilling he is to ruin *us*. But then, by exacting the *Sufferings* of another in *our* stead, before he will be induced to grant a Pardon to us, he manifests to us, how implacably he hates *our Sins*, and how inexorably severe he is against them. But then, if he pardon *us* upon *this* Reason of *another's* suffering in *our* stead; then, the greater and more excellent the Person is that suffers for *us*, the greater Reason he hath to forgive *us* upon it. For such as the Person is that *suffers*, such is the Moment and Value of his Suffering: Because the End of all such *Vicarious Punishments* being only *this*, to give such an Example of the Severity of Governours against Offenders, as may be sufficient to vindicate the *Honour* of the Law, and secure the *Obedience* of the Subject; the Value of his Suffering, who *thus* suffers for *us*, must consist in *this*, that this is a *more or less* exemplary Signification of the Severity of the Law-giver against *our Sins*, for which he *suffers*: And doubtless, it would be a higher Signification of God's Severity against *our Sins*, not to pardon *us*, but upon the *Sufferings* of an *innocent Angel*, than not to pardon *us*, but upon the *Sufferings* of an *innocent Man*.

What a most exemplary Signification then is *this* of his Severity against *our Sins*, that he would not pardon *us*, but upon the *Sufferings* of his own most *innocent Son*; who being the greatest Person in all the Creation, did by *his* suffering in *our* stead, exhibit the greatest Instance of God's Severity against *our Sins*, that could possibly have been given by any Person whatsoever, that was capable of suffering for *us*? So that *his* suffering in *our* stead, was apparently the best and highest Reason that could possibly have been given to move God to pardon *us*; and consequently, his pardoning *us* in such a Way, and upon such a Reason, is a most *glorious* Instance of his *Goodness* towards *us*, and of that tender Regard he hath of *our* Welfare. For now in the very Method of his pardoning *us* what is past, he hath taken a most *effectual Course* to secure our Obedience for the *future*; that very Reason that moved him to *pardon* us, being the greatest Reason that can be urged to terrifie us from sinning again. For what Consideration is there that can fill us with greater Horror against *our Sins*, than *this*, that the Guilt of them is so great, and heinous, that the most merciful Father would never have forgiven them, had not his own most *glorious Son* suffered for them in *our* stead?

And indeed, had not God thus provided for the securing of our Obedience in the very Method of his Pardon, his Grace in pardoning *us*, would have been very insignificant: For our Welfare and Happiness being all bound up in our Obedience, our Pardon without this, could not have secured us from being miserable. So that if in the Method of his Pardon he had not so manifested his Severity against *our Sins*,

Sins, as to discourage us sufficiently from sinning again ; his very *Mercy* and *Compassion* would have proved *destructive* to us ; because it would have encouraged us to sin on, and thereby to make our selves miserable. For Sin and Misery are so inseparably interwoven, that all the Pardon God can give us, while we continue in our Sins, is not sufficient to prevent our being miserable. But such hath been his *Goodness* towards us, such his Care to prevent our Sin and Misery, as that in the very Reason that moves him to pardon us, he gives us a most terrible Warning not to sin again : For he that can behold such a dreadful Spectacle, as the *Son of God* dying for Sin, and yet sin on ; is a Valiant Sinner indeed ; and may with the same Courage follow his *Lusts* into the *Flames of Hell*. So careful hath the good God been to plot and contrive for the Welfare of his *Creatures*, that he would not so much as pardon them when they had offended him, but in such a Way as was most for their Security and Good.

3. His consenting, that his own Son should submit himself to this Suffering, is another great Instance of his Goodness towards us, in this Method of pardoning us. That he should not only admit of a Sacrifice to bear our Transgressions, and suffer in our stead ; but that himself should provide one for us, and such a one too, as his own most dear Son, is such a Miracle of *Love* and *Goodness*, as the whole Creation cannot parallel. For tho' Mankind had provoked him to that Height, that none but a God of infinite Patience could have born it ; yet such was his *Unwillingness* to inflict that direful Punishment upon them, which he had justly threatened, and they had justly deserved ; that notwithstanding all their *Demerits*, he was still vehemently inclined to be *propitious* to them. But then, how to save them, and at the same time to manifest his Severity against their Sins, as was needful to preserve the Authority and Honour of his *Laws* that had threatned Destruction to them, was the great Difficulty : For should he have wholly omitted the Punishment, he would have very much undervalued the Authority of his *Laws* in the Esteem of his *Subjects*, the main security of their Authority being the Punishment annexed to them ; but on the contrary, should he have exacted the utmost of the Punishment, he must have destroyed the whole Race of Men, we being all Offenders in his sight.

In this Extremity therefore, that he might pardon such a World of Sinners with safety to his Government, it was highly necessary for him to exhibit to the World some dreadful Example of his Severity against them, such as might be sufficient to prevent Offenders from taking any Encouragement from his pardoning them, to offend again. But to make a Sinner such a great Example of his Severity against the Sins of *others*, was impossible ; because *his own* Sins may deserve the utmost severity that God can inflict upon him : And therefore, among our selves, who were all Sinners, there was no Person could be found, fit to be made such an Example of his severity against the Sins of the whole World. And if an innocent Angel should have offered up himself to bear our Punishment, and suffer in our stead ; his suffering in our room would not have so sufficiently expressed God's severity against the Sins of a whole World of Sinners, as was convenient : For what great severity would it have been, to have exacted the suffering of one innocent Angel, in lieu of that Eternal Punishment that was due to a whole World of Men ? Wherefore, it being highly convenient, that the Dignity of the Person who suffered for us, should be such as might render his suffering, in some degree, proportionable to the Punishment due to our Sins ; that so his suffering in our stead might be as exemplary to the World, as if we our selves had suffered to the utmost of our Desert ; and there being no Creature of that Dignity, either in Heaven or Earth ; in this Extremity the *Eternal Son of God* himself interposes, and freely offers to unite himself to our Natures, and therein to suffer in our stead ; upon condition, that upon our unfeigned Repentance and Amendment, a Free Charter of Pardon might be granted for all our *past Provocations*.

So that now an Expedient being *proposed*, by which God might both pardon our Sins, and sufficiently manifest his severity against them, to secure the Authority of his *Laws*, and deter us from sinning again ; though he saw, how dear an Expedient it would prove ; that it would cost him the most precious Blood of his

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own Son; yet such was his tender Pity towards us, so great his Unwillingness to ruine us *for ever*, that he freely complied to the Motion, and consented that his Son should be sacrificed for the Sins of the World. And hence it is said, that *he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*, Rom. 8. 32. And the Reason why he delivered him up, as he tells us, V. 3. of the same Chapter, was to *condemn Sin in the Flesh*; that is, to pronounce in the Suffering of his own Son for it, what a dreadful Punishment it deserved, and how much his Soul was incensed against it, that would not Pardon it without such a mighty Propitiation.

How inexpressibly *gracious* therefore, hath God been to us, that when for the securing the Authority of his Laws, it was so *necessary* to condemn our Sins, rather than condemn them in our own *personal* Punishment, he should chuse to condemn them in the Sufferings of his own Son? It was a great Instance of his Goodness towards us to admit of *another* to suffer for us, in our stead: But to admit of his own Son, who is the *Darling of Heaven*, and the *Delight of his Soul*; and not only so, but freely to give, and deliver him up for us, and amidst all the Yearnings of his *Fatherly Bowels* towards him, not to spare his *precious* Life, when it was to be made the Price of our Redemption; is such a Miracle of Love, as transcends all *Hyperboles*.

4. And Lastly, His chusing to grant Pardon to us upon the Sufferings of his Son as a *Sacrifice* for our Sins, is also another *great* Instance of his Goodness to us in this Way of pardoning us. For the End of granting Pardon to Sinners upon their Repentance, being to encourage them to repent; it was highly *convenient*, to grant it to them in *such* a Way, and upon *such* a Reason, as might most effectually assure them thereof. And considering what was the *general* Persuasion of Mankind in this Matter, there was no such *effectual* Way to secure them of Pardon upon their Repentance, as this of granting Pardon to them upon the Motive of a *Sacrifice* for their Sins. For however it came to pass, I know not; but it was a Principle generally received by Men of all *Nations* and *Religions*, that to appease the *incensed* Divinity, it was necessary, First, that some *Sacrifice* should be made to him for their Sins; and then, that some *high* Favourite of his should intercede with him in their Behalf: Upon which were founded those two *great* Rites of *Propitiatory Sacrifices*, and *worshipping of Demons*, which made up a *great* Part of all the *Heathenish Religions* in the World. For as for *Propitiatory Sacrifices*, they were generally used, not only by the *barbarous*, but by the most *civiliz'd Heathens*; which Sacrifices they devoted unto God, to be their *Proxies* in Punishment, to undergo the Punishment that was due to them for their own Sins. And hence is that of the *ancient Poet*,

Cum sis ipse nocens, moritur cur Victima pro te?

When thou thy self art the Offender, for what Reason should the Victim die for thee?

And Porphyry tells us (*Abstin. l. 4.*) that the *first* Rite of the *Sacrifice of Animals*, was, *τινας νεψους ψωνειν αντι ψωνος αιτουμενους*, *Certain Occasions requiring that a Soul should be offered up for a Soul*; that is, the Life of a *Beast* for the Life of a *Man*: For it was the *constant* Opinion, that the more *worthy* the Sacrifice which they offered, the more *effectual* it was to appease their offended Divinities. And hence in many Places, the *ordinary* Sacrifice of Atonement which they offered, was the Lives of Men: And though this indeed, was the most used in the most *barbarous* Countries; yet in Cases of *great* Danger and Extremity, the *Greeks* and *Romans* themselves did frequently sacrifice *Human* Lives to their Gods: For so it is recorded of the *Romans*, that when their *City* was in *great* Danger of being taken by *Hannibal*, they sacrificed a Man to their *Tutelar God*: And *Servius* tells us of the *Messians*, that in Time of Pestilence, one of the *poorer* sort was wont to offer himself to be sacrificed for the whole *City*; who being for a whole Year nourished with the *purest* Meat, was then led about the *City* adorned with *sacred Vestments*

ments and Cathartick Herbs ; the People following him, making *solemn* Execrations, that the Plague might be removed from the City, and fall upon his Head ; which done, they offered him up in a *Sacrifice*. And in other Places, they offered up pure Virgins of the *noblest* Families, to propitiate their angry Gods : And elsewhere, as *Servius* tells us, they were wont to cast a Man into the Sea with this *Imprecation*, *Θεὸς ἡμῶν γάρυ* ; that is, *Be thou our Purgament, or Redemption*. So also it is said of the *Athenians*, that they maintained some of the most *unprofitable* and *ignoble* of the People, that so when any great Calamity befel the City, they might offer them up in *Sacrifice* to appease their Gods. And that Passage of *Cæsar* concerning the *Gallie Nation*, is very observable ; that in Cases of great Danger and Calamity, they either devoted themselves to the Altar, or else offered up some Man in their stead ; *quod pro vita hominis, nisi hominis vita reddatur, non posse Deorum immortalium Numen placari arbitrantur* ; that is, *thinking that the immortal Gods would never be appeased, unless they offered up to them the Life of Man for the Life of a Man*. All which is an Evidence that they not only thought *Sacrifices* necessary to appease God ; but that they also believed, the *better* the *Sacrifice* was, the more effectually it did appease him. Nor did they think it less necessary, that there should be some *Intercessor* between them and the *supream* Divinity, to solicit their Cause, and render Sin *propitious* to their Desires. And hence it was the general Doctrine of their *Divines*, that 'twas great *Prophaneness* for any thing that was *earthly* and *sinful*, immediately to approach that *Pure* and *Divine* Being ; but that the *Demons* were to be the *Mediators* and Agents between him and *Mortal Men*. *Θεὸς ἀνθρώπων ὑμῶν γένοιτο, ἀλλὰ διὰ Δαίμονων πάντα ἔστιν ὁμιλία καὶ ἡ διαლაλία*. *Θεὸς πρὸς ἀνθρώπους*, as *Plato* in his *Sympos.* expresses it : That is, *God is not to be approached by Men ; but all the Commerce and Intercourse between him and us, is performed by the Mediation of Demons*.

So that, howsoever they came by this Principle, it is apparent, that they generally believed both *Sacrifices* and a *Mediator* to be necessary Means to reconcile them to God ; and that without these, they could not satisfy themselves, that God would be *propitious* to them ; no, not upon their Repentance and Reformation. Some good Hopes they might have ; and it is apparent, they had, from the Goodness and Benignity of the *Divine* Nature ; that if they forsook their Sins, God would not be *inexorable* to them ; at least, they could not tell but they might find Mercy : But yet they durst not absolutely trust to this, without devoting some *other* to suffer in their stead, and engaging some *other* to intercede in their Behalf. And therefore we see, that when the King of *Nineveh* upon *Jonah's* Preaching, obliging his People to Fasting and Repentance, the utmost Encouragement he could give them, was only this ; *Who can tell, if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce Anger that we perish not*, *Jonah* 3. 9. Wherefore, to give us the highest Assurance of Pardon if we repent, God hath been so infinitely good to us, as to chuse that very Method of reconciling us to himself, which we had chalked out to him ; and to meet with us in our own Way, thereby to give us a fuller Assurance of his most gracious and merciful Intentions to us : For how could he have better satisfied the Anxiousness and Jealousie of our guilty Minds, than in granting us our Pardon in that very Way, wherein we did so universally hope for, and expect it : Good God ! How indulgent hast thou been to thy poor Creatures, that wast not only so ready to pardon them upon their Repentance ; but so careful to give them the most effectual Assurance of it ; that so thou might'st remove all Discouragement out of the Way to our Amendment and Happiness ! For doubtless, the Reason why he took this Way of Pardoning us, more than another, was not only because it was best in it self, and most for the Interest of his own Government ; but also because of all others, it was the most effectual to satisfy our guilty Fears, and assure us of his merciful Intentions to receive us into Favour again upon our Repentance and Amendment. For when Mankind were so unanimously agreed in this Belief, that without a *Sacrifice* and a *Mediator*, he would not be appeased ; how could he more effectually have convinced our Mistrust of his Mercy, than by sending his own Son to be our *Sacrifice* and *Mediator* ;

to die for our Sins upon *Earth*, and intercede for our Pardon in *Heaven* : So that if now we will heartily repent of our Sins, and forsake them, we have all the Security of Mercy that we can desire ; our God being *atoned* by the *noblest* Sacrifice that ever was, and interceded with, on our Behalf, by the most *powerful* and *prevailing* Mediator. *Having* therefore such an *High Priest* over the *House* of God, we may *safely draw near with a true Heart, in full Assurance of Faith*, as the Apostle expresses it, *Heb. 10. 21, 22.* Thus you see, how *good* and *gracious* God hath been to us in the Way and Method which he hath prescribed, of pardoning our Sins, and releasing us from the Obligation of Punishment *for ever* : Which is so *wise* and *good*, and every way *God-like*, that I think, had I no other Reason to believe the *Christian Religion*, but only this *wondrous* Contrivance of pardoning Sinners, revealed in the *Gospel*, this would have been enough to persuade me, that none but a *God*, could be the Author and Contriver of it. And now I shall conclude this Argument with a few Inferences.

1. From hence I infer, what a very great Evil Sin is, seeing it is such an *Evil* as binds us over to *perish for ever* ; and such as nothing can make Expiation for, but only the *precious* Blood of the *Son of God* ; such, as our *Saviour* must die for, or our Souls must have suffered for, to all *Eternity*. How different therefore are our Thoughts from God's ! We think it a Matter of *Sport* and *Laughter*, a Thing to *Play* and make *Merry* with : But God, who knows the *inmost* Nature of Things, looks upon it as a Thing of such a *black* and *horrid* Nature, as that nothing but the Blood of our Souls, or the Blood of his Son can make Expiation for. *O blessed God !* Had we but such Thoughts of our Sins, as thou hast, how should we *start* and *tremble* at the sight of them ; and with what Horror and Amazement should we reflect upon them ! Surely, if all the *Devils* in *Hell* should stand round about us in the most *ghastly* Shapes and Apparitions, it would not put us into half that Agony of Fear, as would the Sense and Remembrance of *our own* Guilt and Follies. For had we a Window into *Hell*, to look through, and see what *unsufferable* Torments the *damned Ghosts* undergo there for those Sins we make so light of ; how they *burn* and *roar* in those Flames of Lust, about which we, like *filly* Flies, do *sport* and *dally* ; or had we but the *Cross* always standing before our Eyes with the *Son of God* hanging on it, for those Sins that are our Recreation, *sighing* and *groaning* out his *innocent* Soul in Torment and Agonies, to expiate those Faults which we commit with so much Greediness and Pleasure ; surely, either of these *sad* Spectacles would be *sufficient* to *cool* our Courage, and to make us afraid of ever sinning more. Why then should not our Belief of these Things have the same Effect upon us, as the Sight and Sense of them must needs be supposed to have ? *O my Soul*, why should I be so *mad*, as to hug and embrace my Lusts any longer, when I believe the *Evil* of them to be so great, as that the *merciful* Father would never have forgiven them, had not his own most *blessed Son* born their Punishment, and freely submitted himself to suffer for them in my stead ; yea, and which I verily believe, he will never Pardon yet, unless I heartily repent of, and forsake them ; but notwithstanding all that his *Son* hath suffered to make Expiation for them, will yet pursue and prosecute them with the most *direful* Effects of an *endless* and *omnipotent* Vengeance ?

2. Hence I infer, the Certainty of our *perishing for ever*, if we do not repent of our Sins and forsake them. For if God would not have forgiven them upon our Repentance, unless an Expiation had been made for them by the Blood of his *Son* : how can we imagine, that he will now forgive them, whether we repent of them or no ? When all that could be obtained for us from our *offended* God, by the *valuable* Blood and Wounds of his own *Son*, (which Language was a thousand Times more *effectual* for us than all the *Rhetorick* of *Angels* could have been) was only this, that if yet we would heartily repent and amend, we should certainly find Mercy and Favour at his Hands ; can we be so *assured*, as to hope for any more ; Is it likely that our *obstinate* Continuance in *wilful* Rebellion against him, should be a more *prevalent* Advocate for us, than the most *eloquent* Blood of that *innocent*

ent Lamb, which spoke better Things for us than the Blood of *Abel*? Will he be he more *indulgent* to our Sins, than he was to the *obedient* *Sufferings* of his own *Son*, whose Blood cried *Mercy, Mercy*, with a Voice more *moving* and *persuasive* than the *united* Prayers of a World of *sinful* Creatures could have done, though they had been washed in Floods of *penitent* Tears? Let us not therefore be so fond, as to presume, that when the *utmost* that God would grant us for his own *dear* Son's sake, was to receive us to Mercy upon our *unfeigned* Repentance; he will now for our own sakes pardon us whether we repent or no. And since at the *powerful* Intreaties of the Blood of *Jesus*, he hath indulged to us as much Mercy as was fit for him to grant, and much more than we could ever have hoped for; let us not be so *immodest* as to expect any farther; but fix this as an eternal *Verity* in our own Minds, that either our Sins, or our Souls must *perish*; and then if after all that he hath done for us, we will continue *wicked*, there is no Remedy, but we must be *miserable for ever*.

3. And Lastly, Hence also I infer, how *inexcusable* we are, if we now *perish* in our Sins, now God hath done such great Things for us, and contrived such an *excellent* Way to pardon us. So that now there can be nothing wanting to the Accomplishment of our Pardon, but only *our own* Repentance and Reformation: For God and our *Saviour* have done all that is to be done on their Part; our *Saviour* hath suffered for us, and God hath accepted it as an Expiation for our Sins. And now the whole Matter sticks at us, and there is nothing wanting but only our Repentance; and if we will not Repent, and thereby intitle our selves to that *merciful* Pardon which God and our *Saviour* have prepared for us; there is none can be blamed for our Ruin, but our selves: For when *Inquisition* shall be made for the Blood of our Souls, the only Cause of our Ruin will be found to be this, that we were wilfully and obstinately *impenitent*.

What then shall we be able to say for our selves; when we come to plead for our Lives at the *Tribunal* of God? Shall we plead, that our Condition was *hopeless* and *desperate*, we being bound over for our *past* Sins to an *irrevocable* Damnation? Alas! With what Confidence can we plead this, when God hath been so *merciful*, as not to exact of *our own* Persons the Penalty which his Law hath denounc'd against us; but graciously admitted *another* to suffer for us; and upon his suffering, promised to forgive us, if we would heartily repent? Or can we pretend, that by this *gracious* Indulgence of his, he encouraged us to sin on; and gave us Reason to hope, that he, who without our Repentance had remitted so much of the Severity of his Laws, as to admit *another* to suffer in our stead, might as easily be induced to remit all, whether ever we repented or no? Why, how could he have more effectually discourag'd us from sinning on, when he would admit of no *less* Suffering, but what, considering the Greatness of the Person who underwent it, was as *dreadful* an Example of his Severity against Sin, as if he had damned for ever a whole World of Sinners? Or will you urge, that you thought it in vain to return, since by your *former* Sins you had for ever forfeited the Favour of God? For though there was some Hopes that he might be intreated to pardon, or remit your Punishment, yet 'twas in vain to hope, that after so many Provocations he would ever be thoroughly reconcil'd again, so as to receive you into Grace and Favour. But when by sending his own *Son* to die for us, he had given us so *plain* a Proof of the Sincerity of his Affection towards us, with what Face can we suspect his Kindness? For, is it likely, that he who was so *good*, as to give his *Son* for us whilst we were in Impenitence, should be so *implacable*, as to deny his Love to us upon our Repentance and Amendment? Was it not a much higher Act of Love, to give his *Son* for Sinners, than to receive *poor prostrate* Penitents into Favour? He then who was so free to do the *former*, we might well imagine, would be much more free to do the *latter*. Or lastly, Dare we plead for our selves, that considering the Anxiousness and Jealousie of *guilty* Minds, God hath not given us such Security of his Readiness to pardon and be reconcil'd to us, as was *requisite* to dispel all those Fears and Doubts by which we were discourag'd from Repentance and Amendment?

But

But how *weak* and *groundless* this Plea is, will soon appear to all the World. when it shall be considered, what an effectual Course God took to obviate all our *Doubts* and *Fears*, by pardoning us in our own Method; namely, upon the Motive of a *Sacrifice*, and Intercession of a *Mediator*; especially, of such a *Sacrifice* and *Mediator* as his *own Son*: For let him be never so severe and stern, yet 'tis impossible he should be inexorable to the *Valuable Blood* and *importunate Intercessions* of that dear Person, whom he loves above all the World. And now, when God had so contrived the *Method* of his *pardoning* us, as to take from us all Occasion, of presuming upon his Mercy, whilst we continue *impenitent*; when he hath taken such an effectual Course to raise both our *Hopes* and *Fears*, which are the Springs of our Action, to their highest Pitch and Capacity; and given us the greatest Certainty that the Nature of the Thing will bear, that he will punish us *for ever*, if we sin on; and pardon, and receive us into Favour, if now at last we will repent and return; what can we say for our selves, if in Despite of all this, we will run from Mercy, whilst its Arms are open to embrace us; and leap into Hell with our Eyes open, and we see it gaping ready to devour us?

DISCOURSE XX.

UPON

JOHN iii. 16.

——— *But have everlasting Life.*

I Am now upon the *last* Branch of the Text ; which is, to shew you the Great Goodness of God to *us*, in promising to *us* such a vast Reward, upon our performing such an *easy* Condition, as our *believing in Jesus Christ*. In which Reward there is,

First, The *privative* Part of it, or the Misery it rescues us from, *That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish.*

Secondly, the *Positive*, or the *Happiness* it instates us in, *but have everlasting Life.*

In the Management of which, I shall do these Two Things :

1. Shew you, why this Reward is termed *Everlasting Life*.
2. How unspeakably good God hath been to us, in proposing to us such a vast Reward.

1. Why *this* Reward is stiled by the Name of *Everlasting Life* : For it is very usual in Scripture to express all the *Blessings* it promises to Men, by the Name of *Life*. For thus by *Life*, the Old Testament very frequently expresses those *Temporal Blessings* which are therein promised and proposed. So *Dent. 30. 15.* See I have set before thee this Day *Life and Good, and Death and Evil* : In which he plainly refers to those *Temporal Blessings and Curses*, which he had proposed to, and denounced against them, *Chap. 28.* For so *Ver. 19.* of this Chapter he explains himself ; *I call Heaven and Earth to record this Day against you, that I have set before you Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing : Therefore chuse Life, that both Thou and thy Seed may live.* So *Levit. 18. 5.* *Ye shall keep my Statutes, and my Judgments : Which if a Man do, he shall live in them :* That is, he shall enjoy all those *Temporal Blessings* which I have therein promised. For so *Ezek. 20. 21.* *their living in them* is opposed to his pouring out *Temporal Judgments* upon them. And hence the Statutes of the *Mosaic Law* are called the *Statutes of Life*, in which whosoever walks, shall surely live and not die, *Ezek. 33. 15.* And as these *Temporal Blessings* promised in the Old Testament, are commonly expressed by *Life* ; so those *Eternal Blessings* promised in the New Testament, are very frequently expressed by *Life* also. So *Mat. 18. 8.* *It is better for thee to enter into Life halt or maimed, rather than having two Hands, or two Feet, to be cast into everlasting Fire.* So also *Mat. 19. 17.* *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments.* And *Joh. 3. 36.* *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life : And he that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life ; but the Wrath of God abideth in him.* And because the *Blessings* which the Gospel proposes, are not *Temporal*, but *Eternal* ; therefore that *Life* by which they are expressed, is stiled *Eternal, Everlasting and Immortal.* For so *2 Tim. 1. 10.* we find *Life and Immortality* joined together. And *Rom. 6. 22.* *Ye have your Fruit unto Holi-*

Holiness, and the End everlasting Life: And Ver. 23. The Gift of God is eternal Life. Now, that it is not called *eternal Life*, merely as it is a State of *endless Being and Existence*, is evident; because *Being and Existence* are *indifferent Things*, abstracted from all sense of *Happiness and Misery*; but *Eternal Life* is proposed to us as a Thing that is *infinitely desirable* in it self, as being the *Crown and Reward* of all our *Obedience*: For which reason it is called the *Crown of Life*, Jam. 1. 12. And therefore, the Reason why the Everlasting Blessings of the Gospel are expressed by *Life*, are,

First, Because of the inestimable Worth and Value of *Life*.

Secondly, Because *Life* is the Root of all our Sense of *Pleasure and Happiness*.

Thirdly, Because it is the *Principle* of all our Activity.

1. The *everlasting Blessings* of the Gospel are called *Life*; because *Life* is the most inestimably precious of all the *Blessings* we enjoy. For without *Life* there is nothing can be a real Blessing to us, nothing that we can taste, relish or enjoy: And this the Devil knew well enough, when he pronounced so confidently, *Skin for Skin; yea, all that a Man hath, will he give for his Life*, Job 2. 4. Now, it is usual with Scripture, to describe the Blessings of a Future State, by Things that are of the greatest Value among Men, by Riches and Treasure, by a Crown and a Kingdom, by a Paradise, or a Garden of Pleasure: But, as if all these were too faint and dim, to represent the true Value of that blessed State, it is stiled *Life* also, which is much more valuable than either, yea, than all those Things together. And hence the Apostle calls it, *a more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. 4. 17.

1. It is called *Life*; because *Life* is the Root of all our Sense of *Pleasure and Happiness*. For without *Life*, we are nothing else but a Lump of stupid and insensible *Flesh*, incapable of perceiving either *Pleasure* or *Pain*. So that all Sensation being founded in *Life*, and all *Pleasure* a sweet and grateful Sensation; by a very easy Figure, the natural Effect and Operation of *Life*, is expressed by *Life*. And indeed, all the Advantage of living consists in living in a sense of *Pleasure*: And therefore it hath been very much disputed among Philosophers, whether this Temporary State of ours, in which there is so great an Intermixture of *Pain* with *Pleasure*, and *Misery* with *Happiness*, doth not better deserve the Name of *Death* than *Life*: And those of them who thought it more liable to *Misery* than *Happiness*, affirm'd it to be a State of *Death*, and strictly maintain'd this *Paradox*, that at our Birth we die into a worse state than *Non-existence*; and at our Death are born into a true and proper state of *Life*. But they who counted our present *Life* to be intermix'd with more *Pleasure* than *Misery*, esteem'd our present *Existence* a *Privilege* deserving the Name of *Life*: Which is an Argument that both plac'd all the *Privilege* of living in those pleasant Perceptions that are Founded in it. And thus also, according to the Scripture-Philosophy, to Live, as it imports Advantage to us, is to live in a state of *Joy and Pleasure*; so Psal. 22. 26. *The Meek shall eat and be satisfied: They shall praise the Lord that seek him; your Heart shall live for ever*; that is, you shall so abound with Matter of *Joy and Praise*, that your Hearts shall be satisfied and contented for ever. So Job. 14. 19. *Because I live, ye shall live also*; that is, because I rise from the Dead, and live for ever, ye shall rejoice and be glad. So also 1 Thess. 3. 8. *For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord*; that is, we rejoice in your Constancy and Perseverance: For so it follows immediately after; *For what Thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the Joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before God?* How properly therefore may the Future State be express'd by *Life*, since 'tis the proper Scene of *Happiness*, where *Joy and Pleasure* doth for ever abound; where there is an inexhaustible Spring of pure unmingl'd Delights issuing forth in Rivers of *Pleasure* from God's Right Hand for ever? So that if there be any thing worthy of the Name of *Life*, it is the blissful State of those happy Souls above, who live in a continu'd Sense of those unspeakable Joys and Comforts that an everlasting Heaven imports.

3. And

3. And Lastly, It is called *Life*, because *Life* is the Principle of all Activity. 'Tis this that inlivens all our Instruments of Action, and communicates Motion to all our Faculties and Powers. And hence the State of *Heaven* may well be called the State of *Life*; because 'tis a State of the *highest* Activity, wherein all our Faculties act with *unspeakable* Vigour, are freed from all that Weight of Sin and Matter that *here* do continually clog and *incumber* them, and entertain'd with such agreeable Objects, as do perpetually imploy and exercise them to the utmost of their Strength and Activity: Where *infinite* Truth and *infinite* Goodness being always in our View and Prospect, will continually draw forth the utmost Force of our *Understandings*, *Wills*, and *Affections*, in the most *rapturous* Contemplation, Fruition, and Embrace of that *all-glorious* Object in which we behold them: So that we shall not only Act suitably to the *Genius* of our *rational* Natures; but in every Act shall exert our utmost Activity, and *know*, and *love*, and *rejoyce*, and *delight* as much as ever we are able. Wherefore, since in that blessed State we shall be all *Life*, and *Spirit*, and *Wing*; since all our *rational* *Faculties* shall be most incessantly and vigorously imployed about the most agreeable and *consentaneous* Objects, we being converted, as it were, into pure Acts of *Knowledge*, and *Love*, and *Joy*, and *Satisfaction*; our State and Condition may be very well expressed by *Life*, which is a most *vigorous* Principle of Activity. So that as *Life* is the most *inestimable* Jewel we have; as it is the Principle of all our Activity, it doth most properly express the *infinite* Value, Pleasure, and Activity of that *blissful* State which God hath prepared to reward our Obedience. And so I have done with the *First* Thing propos'd; which was, to shew you, for what Reason the *eternal* Rewards of the *Blessed* are so frequently expressed by *everlasting* *Life*.

2. I proceed now to shew you in the *second* Place, how *unspeakably good* God hath been to us, in proposing such a *vast* Reward, upon the Performance of such an *easy* Condition. In the Management of which, I shall first discourse of *this* Reward *absolutely*; and shew you, how *great* it is in it self. Secondly, *comparatively*; and shew you, how *great* it is in Respect of the Condition upon which it is promised.

1. We will consider it *absolutely*, how *great* it is in it self. And here I do not pretend to give you a perfect Map of all the *Beatitudes* of that *heavenly* State: For that is a Task fit only for an *Angel*, or a *glorified* Spirit: All I aim at, is, to give you such an *imperfect* Account of it, as God hath thought fit to impart to Mortals in the *Scripture*; which, though it fall infinitely short of the Thing it self; yet is doubtless, the *best* and *utmost* that our *narrow* Capacities can bear. In short, therefore, concerning this *blessed* State, God hath revealed to us, that it includes these six Things:

1. A perfect Freedom from *Evil* and *Misery*.
2. A most intimate Enjoyment of himself.
3. A most endearing Fruition of our *glorified* Saviour.
4. A most delightful Conversation with *Angels* and *glorified* Saints.
5. The *infinite* Glory and Delightfulness of the Place, wherein all these *Felicities* are to be enjoyed.
6. The *endless* Duration of this most *blessed* and *happy* State.

1. *Everlasting* *Life* includes a perfect Freedom from *Evil* and *Misery*. For so we find the State of the *Blessed* in *Heaven* described, that *they hunger no more, neither thirst any more*; that *the Sun lights not on them, nor any Heat*; that is, that they are no longer liable to the *scorching* Heats of Persecution; but that *God hath wiped away all Tears from their Eyes*, Rev. 7. 16, 17. And hence also *Heaven* is called a State of *Rest*, Heb. 4. 9, 11. *There remaineth therefore a Rest to the People of God*. Let us labour therefore to enter into that *Rest*: Which denotes this State to be a perfect *Sabbath*, and *Jubile* of Redemption from all *Evil* and *Misery*. For

as soon as the Souls of *good Men* depart out of this *corporeal* State, in which they now live, they are immediately released from all those *bodily* Passions of *Hunger*, and *Thirst*, and *Pain*, and *Diseases*, whereunto they are now liable by Reason of their *Union* with the Body : And having in a *great Measure* conquered their Wills while they were in the Body, and subdued them to the Will of God, they shall immediately commence into an *high Degree* of Perfection. For being freed from the Incumbrances of *Flesh* and *Blood*, from the Importunities of their *bodily* Passions and Appetites, and the Temptations of *Sensuality* that do now continually solicit them ; they shall no longer be liable to those Irregularities of Affection that do *here* disturb the Tranquillity of their Minds ; and their *Actions* and *Affections* being always regulated by their Reason, their Consciences shall be no longer *bestormented* with those *Terrors* and *Affrightments*, which nothing but the Sence of Guilt can suggest to them ; but enjoy a *perpetual* Calm and Serenity : And being thus freed from all Evils and Disquietudes, both from *within* and *without*, they shall be at perfect Ease, and *for ever* enjoy a most *undisturbed* Repose. O *blest* Day, when I shall take my Leave of Sin and Misery *for ever*, and go to those *calm* and *blissful* Regions, whence *Sighs*, and *Tears*, and *Sorrows*, and *Pains*, are banished *for evermore* !

2. *Everlasting Life* includes a most *intimate* Enjoyment of God. For God being a *rational* Good, is capable of being enjoyed by *rational* Beings, no otherwise than by *Knowledge*, and by *Love*, and by *Resemblance* ; all which Ways he hath promised that we shall enjoy him, when once we are arrived into that *blissful* State. For as for the *Knowledge* of him, St. Paul tells us, that whereas *now we see through a Glass darkly* : we shall then see him *Face to Face* : And whereas *now we know in part*, then we shall know *even also as we are known*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. And St. John tells us, that we shall see him *as he is*, 1 John 3. 2. Which Expressions must needs import such a *Knowledge* of him, as is unspeakably more *distinct* and *clear*, than any we enjoy in this *present* State. For the Eyes of our Minds shall be so *en-
vigorated*, that we shall be able to gaze on the Sun, without *dazzling* ; to contemplate the *pure* and *immaculate* Glory of the *Divinity*, without being confounded with its Brightness ; and our Understandings shall be so exalted, that we shall see more at every *single* View, than we do now in *Volumes* of Discourse, and the most *tedious* Trains of Inference, and Deduction. And enjoying a most *perfect* Repose both from *within* and *without*, we shall have nothing to disturb or divert our *greedy* Contemplations ; which having such an *immense* Horizon of Truth and Glory round about them, shall discover farther and farther, and so entertain themselves with *everlasting* Wonder and Delight. For what an *infinite* Pleasure will that *all-
glorious* Object afford to our *raised* Minds ; which then shall no longer labour under the *tedious* Difficulties of Discourse ; but like *transparent* Windows, shall have nothing to do, but only to receive the Light, which freely offers it self unto them, and shines *for ever* round about them ; when every *new* Discovery of God, and of those *bottomless* Secrets and *Mysteries* of his Nature, shall enlarge our Capacities to discover more, and still *new* Discoveries shall freely offer themselves as fast as our Minds are enlarged to receive them ! This doubtless, will be a Recreation to our Minds, infinitely *transcending* all that we can conceive or imagine of it ; especially, considering that all our *Knowledge* shall terminate in Love ; that *sweet* and *grate-
ful* Passion that *sooths* and *ravishes* the Heart, and *dissolves* it into Joy and Pleasure : For God being infinitely *good* and *amicable*, the more we know him, the more Cause and Reason we have to love him. When therefore we are arrived to that Degree of *Knowledge* which the *beatifical Vision* implies, we shall find our Hearts inflamed with such a *vehement* Love to him, as will issue into an *unspeakable* Delight and Satisfaction, and even overwhelm us with *Divine* Illapses, those more *immediate* Touches and Sensations of God, which *Good Men* do sometimes experience in *this* Life, do so affect and ravish them, that they are even forced into *Triumphs* and *Exultations* ; how will they be wrapt and transported in that State of *Vision*, when they shall see him so immediately, and love him so vehemently, and their Souls shall be nothing else but *entire* Globes of Light and Love, all *ir-
radiated*

radiated and inflamed with the immediate Effluvia's of the Fountain of Truth and Goodness! But alas! As these Joys are *too big* for mortal Language to express; so are they *too strong* for frail Mortality to bear: And if we but for one Day, or Hour, should see God, and love him as those glorified Spirits do; we should, questionless, die with an *Extasie* of Pleasure; and our glad Hearts being tickled with such *insupportable* Joys, by endeavouring to enlarge themselves to make Room for them, all would quickly stretch into a Rupture. But then, as our Knowledge of God shall terminate in the Love of him; so both together, shall terminate in our Resemblance of his Perfections: For having so immediate a Prospect of his Beauties, and being so infinitely enamoured with them, with what *inexpressible* Vigour must we imitate and transcribe them? And our Imitation being invigorated with such a clear Knowledge, and such a *vehement* Love, cannot fail of producing the describ'd Resemblance: So that the more we know God, the more we shall love him; and the more we know and love, the more we shall imitate and resemble him. So that then both our inward Motions, and outward Actions, will be all most pure and perfect Imitations of God; which will produce such an exact Agreement between his Original, and our Copy, that whilst we interchangeably turn our Eyes to God and our selves, and compare Beauty with Beauty, it will fill our Minds with unspeakable Content, to see how the Image answers to the Prototype; what a sweet Harmony and Agreement there is between his Nature and our own. For if from our Love of God there must necessarily result to us such ineffable Joy and Complacency; what a ravishing Delight will it afford us, to see the Signatures of those adorable Beauties, for which we love him, stamp'd and impressed upon our own Natures; when the Glory that shines about, and inflames us, shall shine into us and become our own; and those amiable Idea's of him, which are impressed upon our Understanding, shall stamp our Wills and Affections with their own Resemblance! For so the Apostle tells us it shall be, 1 *Joh. 3. 2.* For when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. Lord, how must our Souls be enlarged and widened, to be able to contain all those mighty Joys that must necessarily spring from our Fruition of thee! And to what a Degree of Happiness shall we be advanced, when we shall be entertained with all the Delights, that the Enjoyment of an infinite Good can afford us; and have Hearts great enough to contain them all, without being over-charged with their Weight and Number!

3. *Everlasting Life* includes a most endearing Fruition of our glorified Saviour. And certainly, this is none of the smallest Ingredients of that blissful State, that we shall ever be with our blessed Lord; as the Apostle expresses it, 1 *Thef. 4. 17.* For herein it is evident, the same Apostle placed one great Advantage of his future State: For so he tells us, he had a Desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better, *Phil. 1. 23.* And indeed, 'tis impossible, but it must be a vast Addition to the Happiness of all virtuous and grateful Souls, to see this blessed Friend and Benefactor, who came down from the Bosom of his Father, and for their Sake exposed himself to a miserable Life, and shameful Death; to see him sitting at his right Hand crowned with Majesty and Honour, surrounded with the whole Choir of Angels and Saints, like a Sun in the midst of a Circle of Stars. How must it needs rejoyce the Hearts of all the Lovers and Followers of this blessed Lamb, to see such a happy Change of his Circumstances; to see him that was formerly despised and spit on, so unworthily treated by an ill-natured World, adored and worshipped, praised and admired by all the Court of Heaven, and celebrated with the Songs of Cherubims and Seraphims, of Arch-angels and Angels, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect; to behold him, that hung upon the Cross, and poured out his Blood there in Groans, and Agonies, merely to make miserable Sinners happy, advanced to the highest Pitch of Splendor and Dignity; and made Head and Prince of all the Hierarchy of Heaven. Verily, methinks, though I were excluded from that happy Place, and had only the Privilege to look in, and see my blessed Lord and Saviour, it would be a most heavenly Consolation to me to behold the Glory, and Honour, and Happiness with which he is surrounded, though I were sure never to partake of it; and the Communion I should have in the Joys of my Master

Master, the *sweet* Sympathy in all his Pleasures, would be a *Heaven at second Hand* to me; and I should feel my self unspeakably *happy* in being a *Spectator* of his Felicity and Advancement. But Oh! When that *dear* and *blessed* Person shall not only permit me to see his Glory, but introduce me into it; when this *blessed* Mouth shall bid me *Welcome*, and pronounce my *Euge bone Serve! Well done, Good and Profitable Servant, enter into thy Master's Joy*; when I shall not only see his *beloved* Face, but be admitted into his *sweet* Conversation, and dwell in his Arms and Embraces for ever; when I shall hear him *record* the *wondrous* Adventures of his Love, through how many *woful* Stages he past to rescue me from *endless* Misery; how will my Heart *spring* with Joy and *burn* with Love, and my Mouth overflow with Praises and Thanksgivings! O *blessed* Jesu! How happy will the Day be, when I, who am loaded with so many vast Obligations to love thee, shall be introduced into thy Presence to see thy Glories, and *sympathize* in thy Joys, as thou didst in my Miseries; to *thank* and *praise* thee Face to Face, for all those Wonders of Love with which thou hast obliged me; and to bear a Part in that heavenly Song, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing; who hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People and Nation*, Rev. 5. 9, 12.

4. *Everlasting Life* includes a most *delightful* Conversation and Society with *Angels* and *glorified Spirits*. For when we come to the *City of the Living God*, the *heavenly Jerusalem*, the *Apostle* tells us, what our Society will be, *viz. an innumerable Company of Angels, and the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, God the Judge of all the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant*, Heb. 12. 22, 23, 24. Lord! What *glorious* Society is here! Society, in which there is nothing intermingled, but what is *Heavenly* and *Divine*; it being altogether composed of the *best*, and *wisest*, and *noblest* Beings in the World. For, as for the *blessed* Saints and *Angels*, they are all most perfectly refined from all that *Folly* and *Peevishness*, *Disguise* and *Disimulation*, which is the Bane of *Human* Conversation; their Understandings are exceeding *large* and *comprehensive*, and their Charity and Goodness is full as extensive as their Knowledge: And in such a *Conjunction* of Wisdom with Goodness, what an *excellent* Society must there needs be produced? For as their *great* Goodness must needs render their Conversation most *free* and *amiable*; so must their *great* Knowledge and Wisdom render it no less *profitable* and *delightful*: And as the latter must needs instruct them in all the *wise* Arts of Endearment; so the former must needs oblige them to use and improve them to the utmost. O, how heavenly therefore, must their Conversation needs be, whilst 'tis thus managed by *pure* Wisdom, and most *perfect* Love; whilst the most glorious Knowledge is the Scope, and the most *ardent* Friendship the Law of all their Converse; who would not be willing to leave a *foolish*, *froward*, and *ill-natur'd* World, for the *blessed* Society of those *wise* Friends, and *perfect* Lovers? And what *greater* Happiness can we desire, than to spend an *Eternity* in such *sweet* Conversation! Where we shall hear the *deep* *Philosophy* of *Heaven* freely communicated in the *wise* and *amicable* Discourses of *Angels* and *glorified Spirits*, who mutually impart the Treasures of each other's Knowledge, without any Reserve or Affectation of Mystery; and freely *Philosophize* without wrangling Disputes, or peevish Contentions for Victory: Where Wisdom is the Entertainment, and Love and mutual Endearments the Welcome; where there is Harmony without Discord, Communication without Disputes, and everlasting Discourse without Wrangling. O happy Day! When I shall depart from this impertinent and unsociable World; and all my good old Friends that are gone to Heaven before me, shall meet me on the Shores of Eternity, and congratulate my Arrival to that *blessed* Society! Where I shall freely converse with the Patriarchs and Prophets, the Apostles and Martyrs, and be most intimately acquainted with all those brave and generous Souls, who have recommended themselves to the World by their glorious Examples; where *Angels* and *Archangels* shall be my familiar Friends, and all those illustrious Courtiers of the great

King of Heaven, shall own me for their Brother, and bid me welcome to their Master's Joy ; and none will disdain my Company, though never so much above me in Glory and Perfection : But from the highest to the lowest, will all receive and entertain me with the *tendrest* Indearments of Heavenly Lovers.

5. *Everlasting Life* includes also the *infinite* Glory and Delightfulness of the Place wherein all these Felicities are to be enjoyed. For though the very State of the Blessed be sufficiently *glorious* to transform the most *dismal* Place into a Paradise, and to create a Heaven in the *darkest* Dungeon of Hell ; yet such hath been the Goodness of God, that he hath prepared a Place proportionably glorious to that blessed State ; which, according to the *Scripture* Account, is the *highest Heaven*, or the *upper* and *purer* Tracts of the *Æther*. For so our Saviour tells the *penitent* Thief, *to day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*, Luke 23.43. And where this *Paradise* is, St. Paul informs us, 2 Cor. 12. For Vers. 2. he tells us of his Being caught up into the *third Heaven*, which in the 4th Verse he calls *Paradise*, where he heard *unspeakable Words*. Now that by the *Third Heaven* he means the *uppermost*, viz. that Heaven of Heavens which is the Throne of God's most glorious Residence ; where Jesus sits at his right Hand among the *holy* *Mirriads* of Angels and glorious Spirits, is evident from this ; because, according to the *Jewish* Philosophy, to which he here alludes, Heaven was divided into *three* Regions, viz. the *Cloud-bearing*, *Star-bearing*, and *Angel-bearing* Region ; the last of which they called the *Third Heaven*, in which they placed the Throne of the Divine Majesty. And that by *Paradise*, he means the same Place, is evident, because by this Name the *Jews*, in whose Language he speaks, were wont to call it the *Third Heaven*, or *Angel-bearing* Region. And hence Rab. Menachem on *Leviticus*, tells us, it is apparent, that the Reward of our Obedience is not to be enjoyed in this Life ; *Verum post dissolutionem Justus adipiscitur Regnum, quod dicitur Paradisus, fructurque conspectu divino ; i. e. that after Death the Just shall obtain that Kingdom, which is called Paradise, and there enjoy the beatifical Vision*. And 'tis very usual for them to express the Blessings of a future Life, by enjoying the Delights of *Paradise* ; and therefore is this Heavenly Region of *Angels* called by the Name of *Paradise*, in Allusion to the Earthly Paradise of *Eden* ; denoting to us, that as that was the Garden of this lower World, which of all other Places did most abound with Pleasures and Delights ; so this is the Paradise of the whole Creation, the most fruitful and delightful Region within all this boundless Space of the World. Nor indeed, can it be imagined to be otherwise ; it being the *Imperial Court* which the great Monarch of the World hath chosen for his special Residence, and which he hath prepared to receive and lodge the glorified *Human Nature* of his own eternal Son, and to entertain his Friends and Favourites for ever. For if these *Out-Rooms* of the World are so royal and magnificent ; how infinitely splendid must we needs imagine the *Presence-Chamber* of the great King to be, the Glory of whose Presence will render it more *lightsome* and *illustrious* than the united Beams of ten thousand Suns. And therefore, though the *Scripture* hath no where given us an exact Description of this glorious Place, because indeed, no *Human* Language can describe it ; yet since God hath chosen it for the everlasting Theatre of *Bliss* and *Happiness*, we may reasonably conclude, that he hath most exquisitely furnish'd it with all Accommodations requisite for a most happy and blissful Life ; and that the House is every way suitable to the Entertainment. Whensoever therefore a pure and virtuous Soul gets free from this Cage of *Flesh*, away it flies under the Conduct and Protection of *Angels*, through the *Air* and *Æther* beyond the Firmament of Stars ; and never stops, till it is arrived to those blessed Abodes, where God and Jesus, Saints and Angels dwell ; where being come, with what unspeakable Delight will it contemplate that Scene of Things ? When all of a sudden it shall see it self surrounded with an *infinite* Splendor and Brightness, so that which Way soever it casts its Eyes, it is entertained with new Objects of Wonder and Delight ; then shall it say, as the *Queen of Sheba* did of *Salomon's Court*, Alas ! How faint and dim, how short and imperfect were all Human Conceits and Descriptions of this blessed Place !

For

For though I have heard great and mighty Things of it ; yet now I find, that not one *Half* of its Real Glory and Magnificence hath ever been reported to me.

6. And Lastly, Everlasting Life includes the Endless Duration of this most blessed and happy State. Thus *Joh. 6. 27.* he calls his Doctrine the *Meat which endureth unto everlasting Life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you* : And *Verf. 40.* he tells them, that *this was the Will of his Father, that every one that believeth on him, might have Everlasting Life.* And *Ver. 47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, hath Everlasting Life.* And *Ver. 51, 54, 58.* he promises them, that upon their *believing in him, they should live for ever.* But because Everlasting Life and For ever doth in Scripture sometimes signifie a *long*, but not and *endless* Duration ; therefore he hath taken care to express *this* Article in such Words, as must necessarily denote an *endless* Duration of Bliss : For he not only tells them, *Chap. 6 V. 50.* that they who believed his Doctrine, should *not die* ; but that *who-soever liveth and believeth in him, should never die*, *Joh. 11. 26.* Yea, and not only so, but that they should *never see death*, *Joh. 8. 51.* that is, should never come within Ken or Prospect of it. Nay, and *Luke 20. 36.* he tells them, *neither can they die any more ; for they are equal to the Angels.* If then our *future* Life be so Everlasting, as that it neither can, nor shall be terminated by Death, it must necessarily be a Life without End, whose Duration is parallel to Eternity. Now, what a mighty Addition must this needs make to the Joys of the Blessed, to consider, that they are such as shall never expire ; when the Soul shall reflect upon her happy State, and think thus with her self ; *O blessed for ever, be a good God ! I am as happy now as ever my Heart can hold ; every Part of me is so thronged with Joy, that I have no room for any more : And that which compleats and crowns them all, is, that they shall be renewed to all Eternity ; and Millions of Millions of Ages hence, be as far from a Period, as they were the first Moment I enjoyed them.* For our Lives and our Happiness shall be co-eternal to one another ; our God shall live for ever, and we shall live for ever to enjoy him ; and in the Enjoyment of such an infinite Good, we need not doubt to find Variety enough still to renew our Joys, and to keep them fresh and flourishing for ever. For as we shall always know God ; so we shall always know him more and more ; and every new Beauty that infinite Object discovers to us, will kindle a new Flame of Love, and that a new Rapture of Joy, and that a new Desire of Knowing, and Loving, and Rejoycing more and more to all Eternity. For so immense will our Happiness be, that we shall need, as well as desire, an Eternity to enjoy it fully ; and after Millions of Ages are spent in the Enjoyment of it, we shall still renew our Fruition, with the same fresh enravishing Pleasures, as when we first possess and enjoy'd it : For, as new Pleasures will still present themselves unto us ; so when we have enjoy'd them never so long, we shall still be at an infinite Distance from any End of our Enjoyment. So that our Happiness consisting of an infinite Variety of Pleasures extended to infinite Duration, we shall neither be cloy'd with the Repetition of it, nor tormented with the Fear of losing it.

And now you see, how vast and immense the Reward of our *obediential Belief* of our Saviour is. I need not tell you, that 'tis a plain and apparent Instance of God's great Love and good Will to the World : For 'tis indeed, such a transcendent Instance, as may justly astonish the whole Creation ; and put both Heaven and Earth into an Extravagance, to see the benevolent Father of the World project such mighty Entertainments of such undeserving Children ; and prepare such a Heaven of boundless and endless Pleasure, to treat such a Company of wretched sinful Worms. O thou infinite Love and Goodness ! How can we sufficiently admire and praise thee, that from such a Depth of Sin and Misery, hast projected to raise us to such an Height of Glory and Felicity ! But this will yet more evidently appear, if from the Absolute Consideration of this Reward, we descend to the Comparative ; which was,

2. The Second Thing we propos'd to discourse of, *viz.* to shew, how Vast this Reward is, in respect of the Condition, or Consideration upon which it is promis'd and propos'd. And this I shall endeavour to make appear to you in these seven Particulars:

1. The Condition is Due; but the Reward is Free and Arbitrary.
2. The Condition is no ways advantageous to God; but the Reward is infinitely advantageous to us.
3. The Condition is small, and easie to be performed; but the Reward is immense and boundless.
4. In performing the Condition, God operates more than we; but in receiving the Reward, we only are concerned.
5. The Condition is Momentary and Temporal; but the Reward is Eternal.
6. In the Performance of the Condition, there are Great Intermixtures of Pleasure with our Labour; but in the Reward, there is not the least Intermixture of Misery with Happiness.
7. The Condition admits of Intermissions of Labour; but in the Reward, there are no Intermissions of Happiness.

1. The Condition is Due; but the Reward is Free and Arbitrary. For God being our Creator, we owe all our Powers of Action to him: And from this Absolute Propriety that he hath in our Powers, he derives an immutable Right to all the possible Service we can render him: So that whilst he enjoyns us nothing but what is possible, he only requires what is due, and what we cannot withhold, without a most unjust Invasion of his Right and Property. For he being the supream Proprietor of all our Powers and Faculties, must needs have an eternal Right to employ and exercise them as he pleases; because by so doing, he only uses *his own* Goods to *his own* Ends and Purposes; which every Proprietor hath an unquestionable Right to do: So that to subtract our Powers from his Use and Service, is to embezzle our Master's Goods, and commit downright Theft and Robbery. Wherefore, since in the Condition of our Salvation, he hath requir'd nothing of us, but what is possible for us to do, this he might have demanded as a just Debt, without offering us any Reward for the Payment of it: But that he should give us a Heaven, only for giving him his Due; and bestow upon us, for paying what we owed him, infinitely more than the whole Debt amounts to, is an Expression of Love beyond all Comparison. When he might have justly sent us into this *Theatre* to act what Part soever he pleas'd, have indeared our Duty to us by nothing but its appendent Delights, and when we had done, remanded us back into our Primitive *Non-entity*; yet that he should recompense the bare Discharge of that Duty we owe him, with the Reward of such an *immortal Bliss*, is such a *stupendous* Height of Goodness, as not only puzzles our Conceit, but out-reaches our Wonder and Admiration.

2. The Condition is no ways advantageous to God; but the Reward is infinitely advantageous to us: For he is so infinitely happy in the Enjoyment of *himself*, and *his own* Perfections, that all the Services of Men and Angels can make no Addition to his Felicity; which depends wholly upon the infinite Goodness and Perfection of *his own* Nature, and is not derived, either in Whole or in Part, from the Tributes or *Free-will* Offerings of his Creatures. For can a Man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any Pleasure to the Almighty, that we are righteous? Or is it Gain to him, that we make our Ways perfect? Job 22. 2, 3. No certainly; when he had nothing but himself to contemplate and love, his Happiness was the same as it is now among all the Praises and Services which he receives from the World of Angels and of Men: And if they should revolt from him, or relapse into *Non-entity* again, he would still remain the same most happy Being that now he is, and ever was. For all true Happiness being founded in Perfection, it is impossible that any Being that is infinitely perfect in *himself*, should become either more or less happy, by any thing that happens from without him. So that

that as to the Happiness of God, it is the same thing whether we obey, or disobey him: So that whatsoever Condition he imposes on us, our Performance of it is but just like bringing Wax to a dying Father; which he requires, not to enrich himself, but only to seal away Fortunes to his Children.

And that he imposes *this* Condition on us, rather than *another*, is, not because it is more advantageous to him; but because it is most conducive to our *Welfare* and *Happiness*. So free and *uninterested* is his Love and Goodness to *us*, that upon *Considerations* no ways *advantageous* to *himself*, he promises infinite Advantages to *us*: For 'tis we reap all the Profit, as well of the *Condition*, as of the *Reward* appendent to it; and he promises *us* Heaven, upon Terms that carry Heaven in the *Performance* of them. For *first*, the *Condition* *perfects* our *Natures*, and then the *Reward* *beatifies* them: For there is nothing in the *Condition* of the *Christian Covenant*, but what our own *Self-love* rightly directed, would oblige us to; nothing but what tends to our *Good*, and is highly conducive to our *Perfection* and *Happiness*. So that whatsoever *Advantages* accrue, either from the *Condition* or the *Reward* annexed to it, they all redound to our selves. So infinitely bountiful is our blessed Master, that with *Vast Wages* he hires his *Servants* to a Work that is a Noble Reward to it self; and courts them with the Promise of Heaven to be *kind* and *merciful* to themselves. O thou *boundless* and *bottomless* Love! What Tongue is able to express thy Beneficence, that hast prepar'd and promis'd a *Heaven* of *endless* and *ravishing* Joys and *Pleasures*, only to tempt and bribe thy *Creatures* to do what is *good* for themselves; and without any Prospect of Self-advantage, hast oblig'd us to be our own Benefactors, by promising to reward us for being so, with a most *glorious* and *blissful* Immortality.

3. The Condition is small, and easie to be perform'd; but the Reward is immense and boundless. For what doth the Lord our God require of us, but only to act like Men, and follow the Prescriptions of Right Reason? Which, if there had never been any Law given to the World, nor any Reward annexed to the keeping it, would have prescribed to us to live *soberly*, *righteously* and *godly* in *this present World*: For, prescinding from all Obligations of Law and Conscience, to do thus, becomes all Reasonable Natures; and is much more for their Interest and Happiness, than the contrary. And is this so hard a Restraint, to be confined to do nothing, but what becomes us; and withhold from nothing, but countermining our own Happiness? But then, if we consider, how our Duty is *sweetned* over with Pleasure, *encouraged* with the Smiles of God, and *backt* with the Approbations of our own Consciences; with what gentle Mitigations it is required, with what puissant Motives it is inforc'd, and with what powerful Grace it is assisted and promoted; we must acknowledge it to be a most gracious, easie and gentle Yoke. But if we measure it by the *Vastness* of the Reward, I confess, it looks like some great and mighty Thing. For if we value God's Bounty by *our own*, we cannot but conclude, that sure, he would never have made such Vast Preparations for our Happiness; nor planted such a Paradise of Pleasures to entertain us, but upon some mighty Condition to be perform'd on our Part.

And, indeed, had he impos'd the hardest Condition in the World, sent us to row in the *Gallies*, or dig in the *Mines* for a thousand Years together; such a Vast Reward would have been sufficient to have rendred it, not only tolerable, but easie and delightful. But that he shou'd promise us such a mighty Recompence, as the Joys of an everlasting Heaven, includes a Recompence as large as our utmost Capacities, and as lasting as our longest Duration; and this, upon no other Condition, but our sincere Belief of, and Obedience to his Gospel, whose Precepts are all *natural* and *easie*, and pregnant with *unspeakable* Pleasure and *Delight*; is such a Prodigy of Goodness, as we can never sufficiently *admire* and *adore*: That merely for believing a Revelation, of whose Truth we have such a convincing Evidence, and practising suitably to our Belief, we should, from wretched mortal Worms, be advanced to an equal Pitch of Bliss and Glory with immortal Angels; and live as happily for ever, as all the Joys of Heaven can make us; is doubtless, such an Instance of Love and Bounty, as could only proceed from infinite Goodness.

4. In performing the Condition, God operates more than we ; but in receiving the Reward, *we* only are concern'd. For to our *sincere* Belief and Obedience of the *Gospel*, it is plain, that God contributes much more than *we* : For besides that he is the Author of those *Faculties* by which *we* do believe and obey him, of all those *Evidences*, by which *we* are convinced of the Truth of his *Gospel* ; and of all those *Motives*, by which *we* are *animated* in our Obedience to it : Besides all which, I say, he is also the Author of all that *inward* Grace and Assistance by which our *pious Endeavours* are excited, and crown'd with a *blessed* Success. And considering how much all these Things do operate upon our Performance of the *Gospel-Condition*, it is not only *true*, that without God's Grace *we* should never have perform'd it ; but also, that in our Performance of it, *that* is the *main* and *principal* Agent : And no Man ever yet became a *heartly* Believer and Disciple of *Jesus*, but was much more beholding to the Grace of God, than to his own Activity and Endeavour. And hence we are said, *to be created in Christ Jesus unto good Works*, Eph. 2. 10. Not but that God exacts the Concurrence of our Endeavours with his Grace ; and that in the Performance of the *Gospel-Condition*, as well as in any other Affair of our Lives. For it is the Blessing of the *Lord* that makes Men *rich*, as well as *Good* ; and *we* may as well expect that he should make us *rich* without Industry, as *good* without Diligence and Endeavour : But when *we* have done our *utmost*, 'tis to the Grace of God, as to the *principal* Cause, that all our *Good* is to be attributed. But yet, tho' 'tis he that works *this* Condition in us, that is the *Author* and *Finisher* of our *Faith* ; yet the Reward doth wholly redound to our selves, as if we had been the Authors and Finishers of all : And though he hath the *greatest* Share in the Work ; yet he subtracts nothing at all from the Wages ; but pays us infinitely more than the *utmost* Merit of the Work amounts to. He gives us *Faith*, and then he crowns *his own* Gift with *Glory*, and *Honour*, and *Immortality*. He *sows* and *cultivates* our Nature, that we may *reap* the *Crop* and *Harvest*. So infinitely *liberal* is our *blessed* Master, as to reward his Servants for his own Work, to undergo the *greatest* Part of their Labour ; and when 'tis done, to pay them *Ten Thousand Fold* for it.

5. The Condition is *Momentary* and *Temporal* ; but the Reward is *Eternal*. It is but a little while that the Labour of our Duty lasts : For Contancy and Perseverance, will soon render it *natural* and *easy* ; and if it doth not, yet Death will quickly put an end to all ; and within these very *few* Days or Years, we shall see an *everlasting* Period of all the *Pains* of our Watchfulness, and of all the *Severities* of Mortification, and of the *Sorrows* of Repentance ; but then the Reward abides to all *Eternity*, and lasts out a *never-ending* Duration. So that though we shall soon see an End of our Work ; yet the Wages is so *vast*, that we shall be spending on it *for ever* ; and *Myriads* of *Myriads* of Ages hence shall be rejoycing in the Fruits of our *present* Labour, and reaping the *blissful* Effects of our Faith and Obedience, to the latest Moment of Eternity. O thou liberal Rewarder of Men ! Who can sufficiently admire thy Goodness, that remuneratest our short Pains with *endless* Pleasures, and exchangest with us an *Eternity* of Happiness, for the Labour of a *Moment* ? For when we are arriv'd into that vast *Eternity* of Bliss, all the Pains we have taken in our Voyage thither, will hardly bear the Proportion of a *single* Unite to an *infinite* Sum : For what are *twenty* or *thirty* Years, but a *Moment* to *Ten Thousand Thousand* ? And what are *Ten Thousand* Years, but a *Moment* to an *endless* Eternity ? So that, methinks, when I consider that after *Ten*, or *Twenty*, or *Thirty* Years Service, I shall be allowed an *Eternity* to spend in the most *ravishing* Joys and Pleasures ; and live as happily *for ever*, as God and an *everlasting* Heaven can make me ; the Bounties of my *blessed* Master appear in such a *prodigious* Bulk to me, that I am even confounded at the Prospect of them ; and all this Time I have to spend in *Religion*, in *Prayer*, and *Watchfulness*, in subduing my *Passions* and *Appetites*, and contending with my own *Inclinations*, seems nothing to me ; but like a little *Rivulet*, is swallowed up in that boundless and bottomless Duration, where it loses it self, and is no more remembered by me.

6. In the Performance of the Condition, there are great Intermixtures of Pleasure with our Labour; but in the Reward, there is not the least Intermixture of Misery with Happiness. That Man must be very much unexperienc'd in a *Christian* Life, who thinks it a melancholy, sour, and rigorous Thing: For besides, that it freely indulges to us all the *innocent* Gratifications of our Senses, and all the Refreshments of honest Mirth and moderate Recreation; it hath so many choice and peculiar Pleasures of its own, as are sufficient to endear it unto all wise Men, though it had no other Reward to recommend it: For all the Acts and Functions of it being more agreeable to *Human Nature*, must needs be highly grateful to it. For what can be more agreeable to a reasonable Nature, than to *adore*, and *love*, to *praise* and *confide* in the Fountain of its Being and Happiness? And being so agreeable, how can they but abound with Pleasure and Delight? What can be more suitable to a sociable Nature, than to be *kind* and *obliging*, *courteous* and *beneficent*, to all we converse with? And being so suitable, how is it possible but it should be sweet and delightful? In a word, what can be more *convenient* to a Nature, that is compounded of an immortal Spirit and a mortal Body, than to keep the *Body* in Subjection to the *Mind*, and Govern its Appetites and Passions by the Rules of *Reason* and *Sobriety*? And being so convenient, what *Content* and *Satisfaction* must there needs accrue from it? For the Pleasure of every Being consists in acting agreeably to its own Nature; and therefore since to act religiously, is so agreeable to the Nature of Man, it is impossible but it must be pleasant; especially, considering how much it conduces to the *Tranquillity* of our Minds, and the *Peace* of our Consciences, and the *Advancement* of our Interests in *both* Worlds: All which being considered, I dare boldly affirm, that if there were no other Reward of a religious Life, but only its own *appendent* Delights; yet this were enough to recommend it unto any *wise* Man; and that there never was any Man whatsoever, that made a *thorough* Experiment of it, but found it far more pleasant and agreeable to him, than the most *jovial* Courte of Wickedness and Impiety. And yet, to this pleasant Life it is, that the good God doth tempt and invite us by the Promise of a *Heaven of Pleasures*: And though the Life he *woo*es us to, hath Joy and Bliss enough to compensate all the Toil and Labour of it; yet to oblige us hereunto, he hath made it a most *certain* Passage to a Life of *pure* and *unmingled* Bliss, that hath not the least Alloy of Misery in it: For from that most blissful Region all *Pain* and *Sorrow*, *Trouble* and *Vexation*, are banished for evermore. There are no *Winter-Frosts* of Grief to *nip* or *blast* its everlasting *Spring* of Joy; no *Clouds* to *darken* or *over-cast* its Light; but we shall *know* without *Mistake*, *love* without *Jealousie*, *obey* without *Reluctancy*, *praise* without *Complaint* or *Murmuring*, and *rejoice* for ever without *Sighing* or *Disturbance*. Lord! What *amazing* Bounty is this, that thou shouldst crown the most pleasant Life upon *Earth* with a most *pure* and *unmingled* Life of Pleasures in *Heaven*; and make *one* Paradise the Reward of *another*! How deeply art thou concerned in our Welfare, that to oblige us to live happily *here*, hast prepared a Heaven of pure and endless Happiness to entertain us *hereafter*.

7. And Lastly, The Condition *admits* Intermissions of Labour; but in the Reward there are no Intermissions of Happiness. The Performance of the Condition doth not so wholly take up our Lives, as to admit of no Interruptions: For besides that it not only permits, but requires us to mind our secular Business and Affairs; and is so far from interfering with the work of our Callings, that it promotes and furthers it; it doth not so wholly *ingross* our Time, as not to allow us a *sufficient* Season for our *Rest* and *Recreation*: So that we may perform all that it includes, or requires, without breaking of a *Night's* Rest, or abridging ourselves a *Meal's* Meat, or retrenching from our *Mirth* and *Diversions*, any further than *Reason* and *Sobriety* requires; and consequently, abstracted from the Work of our Callings, which, though it be included in this Condition; yet even our *Temporal* Interest obliges us to follow; 'tis by so much the *smallest* Portion of our Lives which we are obliged to spend in the Exercise of our *Religion*. And if we would make but *moderate* Retrenchments from that Time we spend either in doing
nothing,

nothing, or nothing to the Purpose; and together with that, reprieve those *precious* Moments we squander away in serving and pampering of our Lusts; we might serve God faithfully every Day, and yet have as much Time remaining to do our Business, and enjoy our Pleasures, as now: We might every Morning say our Prayers, renew our Resolutions, and arm our selves with Considerations against the Temptations of the Day; and every Night review the Actions of the Day, confess and lament the Defects of them, and recommend our selves to God's Grace and Protection for the future; and when all this is done, have as much Time as ever we had before, to mind our Affairs, and divert our selves. Nay, so far would this be from any ways hindring our *Business* or *Diversion*, that the *sweet* Sence of having done our Duty, would make us much more *cheerful* in the *one*, and give us a far *sweeter* Relish of the *other*. So far is *Religion* from enslaving us to an *uninterrupted* Toil and Labour, that it doth not only allow us all the Intermiſſions that our *secular* Business, Reflection, and Pleasure requires; but also sweetens them to us, and renders them much more *grateful*. But as for the Reward which *Religion* draws after it, that excludes all Intermiſſions of Happiness. For in that most *blissful* State our Life will be all but one *continued* Act of Joy; and to Eternal Ages, there shall not be one Moment wherein we shall either be sensible of Pain or insensible of Pleasure and Happiness. For as our Happiness will always abound with *fresh* Pleasures; so our Faculties will never be cloy'd with the Enjoyment of them: For those Pleasures being *pure*, *rational*, and *spiritual*, will be so far from spending and weakning our Powers, that they will every Moment strengthen and improve them. So that whereas our Pleasures here consisting in a *vehement* Motion, are very *transient* and quickly slip away, and we must rest a while before we can renew them, and begin the Motion again; those *heavenly* Pleasures are such as will indeed, most *vehemently* affect and move, but *never* weary the Faculties of the Enjoyer. For still the more we *know*, the more we shall *love*; and the more we *love*, the more we shall *rejoyce*; and the more we *rejoyce*, the more we shall *know* and *love*: And so in this *sweet*, but *endless* Circle, we shall move round *for ever* without Weariness; and be so far from spending our Vigour, that every *Moment* of *Eternity* we shall improve it by Exercise and Motion. So that as our Happiness will always abound with *new* Pleasures without any Discontinuance or Intermiſſion; so our Faculties will always renew their Strength and Vigour by Enjoyment. And as there will be no Pause between *one* Joy and *another*, but they will come so thick upon us *for ever*, that the *Follower* will always tread on the *Foregoer's* Heels; so *one* will still make Room for *another*; and those that are *present*, will enlarge our Capacity to receive all those that are immediately to follow. And thus shall we spend our *Eternity* without the *least* Intermiſſion of Joy and Pleasure: For we shall always *know*, and always *praise* the Author of our Happiness; always have a *fresh* Sence of his Goodness *soothing* and *ravishing* our Hearts, and filling them with *ineffable* Joys, without any Ceasing or Interruption. O *blessed* God! What an *amazing* Demonstration is this of thy Love and Goodness to thy Creatures, that for a Work in which there are so many Pauses and *daily* Intermiſſions of Labour, thou shouldst crown us with a Reward, that to all *Eternity* is one *continued* Scene of Happiness without the *least* Gap or Interruption? So that whether you consider this Reward *absolutely*, and in it self, or *comparatively*, with the Condition whereunto it is annexed; you see, it is a most *glorious* Instance of God's *unspeakable* Goodness towards us: And now I shall conclude this Argument with a few *practical* Inferences from the whole.

I. I infer how much Reason we have, to be contented and satisfied, under all the *present* Afflictions of *this* Life. For shall we receive so much *good* at the Hands of God as *Everlasting* Life implies, and not be contented to receive some *Evil*, when our *good* Father hath provided for us a Crown of *endless* Bliss and Glory hereafter? With what Conscience or Modesty, can we complain of those *little* paternal Castigations he inflicts on us here; especially, considering, that the great
Design

Design of all his *present* Severities, is to prepare and discipline us for that *heavenly* State; thus by all these *dismal* Providences, he is only training us up for a *Crown*; fitting, instructing and disposing us to reign with him in *Glory for ever*: Can any *Physick* be *unseasonable* or *distastful*, that is prescrib'd to recover us into such an *happy* Immortality? No, doubtless; every Thing that leads *Heaven-wards*, though never so *grievous*, is a Blessing; and all those *kind* Severities that tend to our *eternal* Welfare are Favours, for which we are bound to *praise* and *adore* the Goodness of *Heaven for ever*. When therefore we find our selves inclin'd to complain under our *present* Pressures and Afflictions, let us lift up our Eyes to *yonder blessed Regions*, and consider the *Joys and Pleasures*, the *Crowns and Triumphs*, that do there await us: and how necessary these *bitter* Trials are to prepare us for, and walt us to them: And if this doth not *stop* our Mouths, and silence our Complaints *for ever*; nay, if it doth not cause us to rejoyce in our Tribulations, and to thank God for them on our *dear* *Wounds*; if it doth not make us chearfully submit, and say, *Ure, Sesa, Vulnere*; Lord! cut, or wound, or burn me; if thou seest fit, strip me of all my *dearest* Comforts; handle me as severely as thou pleasest, so I have my Fruit unto *Holiness*, and my *End* *everlasting* Life; we are infinitely foolish and ungrateful. For 'tis but a *little* while e're all these *Storms* will clear up into an *everlasting* Calm; and all these *dismal* Clouds will vanish, and an *everlasting* Day break forth upon us, whose Brightness shall never be obscur'd with the least Spot or Relique of *Darkness*. And when that *blessed* Time comes, Lord! how trifling and *inconsiderable* will our *present* Grievs appear? With what Contempt shall we reflect upon our *former* Cowardice and Meanness of Spirit, that would not bear without *Murmuring* a few Inconveniencies, on the Road to such an *immortal* Heaven of *Pleasure*? Wherefore if our Voyage be not so *pleasant* as we would have it; yet let us remember 'tis not *long*; we have but a *short* Day's Sail to an *Eternity* of *Happiness*; and when once we are landed on that *blessed* Shore, with what *ravishing* Content and Satisfaction shall we look back on the *rough* and *boisterous* Seas we have past, and forever *bless* the *Storms* and *Winds* that drove us to that *happy* Port! Then will the Remembrance of these *light* Afflictions serve only as a *Fun* and *Anti-mask* to our *Happiness*, to set off its Joys, and render them more *fresh* and *ravishing*. Let us therefore Comfort our selves with these Things; and when at any Time our Spirits are sinking under any *worldly* Trouble or Affliction, consider, that while we have a *Heaven* to hope for, we can never be *miserable*: For so long as we are guarded with this *mighty* Hope, our Mind will be *impregnable* against all *foreign* Events; and maugre all Afflictions from without, its *Serenity* will shine as undisturbedly as the Lights of *Pharos* in the midst of *Storms* and *Tumults*.

Hence I infer, what a *vast* deal of Reason we have to slight and contemn *this* World. For it is plain, that we are born to infinitely *greater* Hopes, than any *this* World can propose to us, even to the Hopes of *everlasting* Life: And being so, methinks, our Ambition should soar as high as our Hopes, and disdain such low and ignoble *Quarries*, as the *Pleasures*, and *Profits*, and *Honours* of this Life. Certainly, Sirs, we mistake the Scene of our *Eternity*; or imagine, that it is remov'd from *Heaven* to *Earth*; and so we are to enjoy our *everlasting* Life below; or else we are most strangely *besotted*; who, when we are born to live *for ever* *above*, in the most *ravishing* *Glory* and *Happiness*, can suffer our selves to doat upon *this* World, and to be so strangely *bewitched* as we are, by its *deluding* Vanities. Oh! could we but stand a while in the *Mid-way* between *Heaven* and *Earth*, and at one Prospect see the Glories of *both*; how *faint* and *dim* would all the Splendors of this World appear to us, in Comparison with those above? How would they *sneak* and *disappear* in the Presence of that *eternal* Brightness, and be forc'd to shroud their *vanquished* Glories, as *Stars* do when the *Sun* appears? And whilst we interchangeably turn'd our Eyes from *one* to *another*; with what Shame and Confusion, should we reflect upon the wretched *groveling* Temper of *our own* Minds? What *poor mean-spirited* Creatures are we, to satisfy our selves with the *impertinent* Trifles of *this* World, when we have all the Joys of an *everlasting* Heaven before

fore us; and may, if we please, after a few Moments Obedience, be admitted into them, and enjoy them *for evermore*? Ah! *foolish Creatures that we are*, thus to prefer a *far Country*, where we live on nothing but *Husks*, before an *everlasting Festivity*, that is celebrated in our Father's House! Where the *meanest Creature* hath Bread enough, and to spare! To chuse *Nebuchadnezzar's Feast*, and leave *Crowns and Scepters*, and live among the *salvage Herds of the Wilderness*! Could the *Blessed Saints* above divert so much from their more *happy Employments*, as to look down a little from their *Thrones of Glory*, and see how *busy poor Mortals* are in scrambling for this *wretched Pelf*, which within a few Moments, they must leave *for ever*; how they *jostle*, and *rencounter*, *defeat*, *despise*, and *undervalue one another*; what a *ridiculous Spectacle* would it appear to them? With what *Scorn* would they look on it; or rather, with what *Pity*, to see a *Company of heaven-born Souls*, capable of, and design'd for the same *Glory and Happiness* with themselves, *groveling like Swine*, in *Dirt and Mire*; *one pining it self in a gay Suit*, *another hugging a Bag of glistening Earth*, a *third stewing and dissolving it self in Luxury and Voluptuousness*, and all imploy'd at that *poor, and mean, and miserable Rate*, as might justly make these *Blessed Spirits* ashamed to own their *Kindred and Alliance*? To tell you truly and seriously my *Thoughts*, I cannot imagine, but, if when we are thus extravagantly concern'd about the *paltry Trifles* of this World, the *Blessed Spirits* do see and converse with us; it is much more *ludicrous and ridiculous Sight* in their Eyes, to see us thus *filthy, cramm'd and imploy'd*, than it would be in us, to see a *Company of Boys* with *Anger and Concern*, *wrangling and crying, striving and quarrelling* for *trifling Toys and Games*. Wherefore in the Name of God, Sirs, let us not expose our *Selves* any more to the just *Derision* of the World, by our *excessive Dotage* upon the *trifling Vanities* of *this Life*; but let us seriously consider, that we are all concern'd in *Matters of much higher Importance*, even in the *unspeakable Felicity* of an *everlasting Life*.

3. Hence I infer, how *unreasonable* it is, for *good Men* to be afraid of *Dying*; since just on *the other side* the *Grave* you see, there is a *State of endless Bliss and Happiness* prepar'd to receive and entertain them: So that to them *Death* is but a *dark Entry* out of a *Wilderness of Sorrow*, into a *Paradise of eternal Pleasure*. And therefore, if it be an *unreasonable Thing* for *free Men* to dread their *Slavery*, for *Slaves* to tremble at their *Jubilee*, or for *Prisoners* to quake at the *News* of a *Goal-delivery*; how much more *unreasonable* is it, for *good Men* to be afraid of *Death*, which is but a *momentary Passage* from *Sickness, Labour, and Confinement*, to *eternal Health, and Rest, and Liberty*? For God's sake, consider, Sirs, what is there in *this World* that you have Reason to be fond of, what is it *after* that you need be afraid of? Suppose, that now your *Souls* were on the *Wing* mounting upwards to the *celestial Abodes*, and that at some convenient *Stand* between *Heaven and Earth*, from whence you might take a *Prospect* of both, you were now making a *Pause* to survey and compare them with *one another*; and having view'd over all the *Glories above*, and tasted the *beatifical Joys*, and heard the *Melodies of Angels*, you were now looking down again with your *Minds fill'd* with these *glorious Idea's*, upon this *miserable World*; and that all in a *View*, you beheld the *vast Numbers* of *Men and Women* that at this *Time* are *fainting*, for Want of *Bread*; of *young Men* that are hewn down with the *Sword of War*, of *Orphans* that are weeping over their *Fathers Graves*, of *Mariners* that are shrieking in a *Storm*, because their *Keel* dashes against a *Rock*, or bulges under them; of *People* that are groaning upon *Sick-Beds*, or rack'd with *Agonies of Conscience*; that are weeping with *Want*, mad with *Oppression*, desperate by *too quick a Sense* of a *constant Infelicity*: Would you not, do you think, upon such a *Review* of both *States*, be infinitely glad that you are gone from hence, that you are out of the *Noise and Participation* of so many *Evils and Calamities*? Would not the *Sight* of the *Glories above*, and the *Miseries beneath* you, make you a *Thousand Times* more fearful of returning *hither*, than ever you were of going *hence*? Yes, doubtless, it would. Why then should not our *Sence* of the *Misery here*, and our *Belief* of the *Happiness*

pinels *there*, produce the *same Effect* in us, make us willing to remove our Quarters, and exchange *this Wilderness* for *that Canaan*?

'Tis true, indeed, the Passage from *one* to *'other* is commonly very *painful* and *grievous*; but what of that? In other Cases we are willing enough to endure a *present Pain*, in order to a *future Ease*; and if a *few mortal Pangs* will work a *perfect Cure* on me, and recover me into *everlasting Bliss* and *Life*; methinks, the *Hope* of this *blessed Effect* should be sufficient to sweeten and endear *that Agony*, and render it *easy* and *desirable*. But alas! To *die*, is to leave all our Acquaintance, to bid *adien* to our *dearest Friends*, and *Relations*, to pass into an *unknown State*, to converse with *Strangers*, whose *Laws* and *Customs* we are not acquainted with: Why now, all that looks *sad* in this, is a very *great Mistake*: For I verily hope, that I have more *Friends*, and *Acquaintance*, and *Relatives* in *Heaven*, than I shall leave behind me here on *Earth*; and if so, I do but go from *worse Friends* to *better*: For *one Friend there* is worth a *Thousand here*, in Respect of all those *endearing Accomplishments* that render a *Friend* a *Jewel*. But if I die a *good Man*, I shall carry into *Eternity* with me the *Genius* and *Temper* of a *glorified Spirit*; and that will recommend me to the *Society of Heaven*, and render the *Spirits* of those *just Men*, whose *Names* I never heard of, as *dear Friends* to me in an *Instant*, as if they had been my *ancient Cronies* and *Acquaintance*. But why should I grieve at parting with my *Friends below*, when I shall go to the best *Friend* I have in *World*, to *God my Father*, to *Jesus my Redeemer*, and to the *Holy Ghost my constant Comforter and Assistant*! And what though the *State*, and the *Laws*, and *Customs* of it, be in a *great Measure* unknown to me? Yet, what I know, is infinitely *desirable*; from whence I may reasonably infer, that what I know not, is so too; and if I have but the *Temper of Heaven*, I shall easily comply with the *heavenly Laws* and *Customs* of it. So that in the whole, I cannot imagine, why any *good Man* that seriously believes the *Doctrine* of a *blessed Immortality*, and hath a *just well-grounded Hope* of being made *Partaker* of it at the *Expiration* of this *mortal Life*, should be so loth to leave *this wretched World*, and expire into *that blessed Eternity*. I do not deny, but the *Circumstances* of our *Affairs* in this *Life*, are many times such, as may justly excuse even a *good Man's* Willingness to die: Some *great Opportunities* of doing *Good* may present themselves, and invite him to stay a *little longer*; or his having begun his *Repentance late*, or not having made a *competent Provision* for his *Family*, may for a *Time* justify his *Unwillingness* to depart; and render it both *excusable* and *reasonable*. But unless it be in these *excepted Cases*, methinks, I can hardly reconcile our *Hopes* of *Happiness* with our *Fear* of *Death*. For when I am verily persuaded, that *Death* is only a *narrow Stream*, running between *Time* and *Eternity*; and I see my *God* and my *Saviour* with *Crowns of Glory* in their *Hands*, beckoning to me from the *farther Shoar*, and calling to me to come over, and receive those *happy Recompences* of my *Industry* and *Labour*; that I, like a *naked timorous Boy*, should stand shivering on this *Bank of Time*, as if I were afraid to dip my *Foot* in that *cold Stream* of *Fate*, which as soon as I am in, I am past, and in the *Twinkling* of an *Eye*, will land me on *eternal Bliss*; is such an *extravagant Inconsistency*, as (if I did not feel in me) I should never believe I could be guilty of.

4. And Lastly, Hence I infer, what a *vast deal* of *Reason* we have to be *diligent* and *industrious* in *Religion*, since *God* hath proposed such a *vast Reward* to us to encourage and animate our *Industry*. How can we account any *Work hard*, of which *Heaven* is the *Wages*? How can we faint in our *Christian Race*, when we see the *Crown of Glory* hanging over the *Goal*? Methinks, this should be enough to infuse *Life* and *Spirit* into the most *crest-fallen Souls*; to make *Cripples* run, and to convert the most *sneaking Coward* into a *bold* and *magnanimous Hero*. For how much *Pains* do we ordinarily take upon far *less Hopes*? In *Hope* of a *little transitory Wealth*, which we know, we shall enjoy but a *few Years*, and then part with *for ever*; we thrust our selves into a *perpetual Croud* and *Tumult* of *Business*; where, with *vast Concern* and *Thoughtfulness*, with *eager* and *passionate Prosecutions*, with *endless Brauls* and *Contentions*, with *jostling*

and *rencontring one another*, we toil and weary our selves, and make our Lives a constant Drudgery : And shall we flag, when Heaven is the Object of our Prosecutions, who are so active in the Pursuit of Triffles ? Whensoever therefore we find our Endeavours in Religion begin to jade and droop, let us lift up our Eyes to the Crown of Glory ; and if we are capable of being moved by Objects of the greatest Value, that must infuse new Vigour into us, and make us all Life, and Spirit, and Wing. For what tho' my Way lies up the Hill, and leads me along thro' Thorns and Precipices, so that I am fain to sweat at every Step, and every Ascent is a Toil to me ; yet when I am up, I am sure to be entertained with such pleasant Gales and glorious Prospects, as will fully recompence all my Toil in climbing thither. There, with an over-joyed Heart I shall sit down and bless my Labours : Blessed be you, my bitter Agonies and sharp Conflicts, my importunate Prayers and well-spent Tears ; for now I am fully repaid for you *all*, and do reap ten thousand times more Joys from you than ever I endur'd Pains. For what are the Pains of a Moment, to the Pleasures of Eternity ? Wherefore, hold out, my Faith and Patience yet a little longer, and your Work will soon be at an end ; and after a few *laborious Week Days*, you shall keep an *everlasting Sabbath*. What tho' my Voyage lie thro' a Stormy Sea ; yet 'tis to the *Indies* of Happiness ; and a few Leagues farther lies the *blessed Port*, where I shall be crowned as soon as I am landed. Go on therefore, O my Soul, with thy utmost Courage and Alacrity : For let the Winds *bluster*, and the Waves *swell* never so much, yet thou canst not miscarry, unless thou wilt. Thou art not, like other Passengers, left to the Mercy of Wind and Weather ; but thy Fate is in thy own Hands ; and if thou wilt but have *thy Fruit unto Holiness*, thy *End shall be everlasting Life*.

DISCOURSE XXI.

UPON

I JOHN iv. 19.

We love him, because he first loved us.

I Have shewed you in the former Discourses, how indispensibly necessary it is that we shou'd love God in order to our being truly Religious ; and proved to you at large, that of all Principles of Religion whatsoever, this is most operative and effectual. And then to excite this Heavenly Affection in you, I have shewn you, that the Goodness of God is the principal Motive that engages our Love to him. And now, that I may more largely explain the Nature and Measures of this Love, as it is our Duty, and engage you to it by this grand Motive of the Divine Goodness ; I have made choice of this Text, *We love him, because he first loved us.*

The Greek Word ἀγαπᾶμεν here, may as well be rendred *subjunctively*, to signify what we ought to do, as *indicatively*, for what we already do : And indeed, it seems more suitable to the Context, to render it *we should*, or *ought* to love him, than *we love* him. For in the former Verses the Apostle earnestly presses Christians to love one another, upon the Consideration of God's great Love to them ; and then consider, how naturally their Love to one another wou'd follow upon their mutual Love to God : He concludes, that the most effectual Course to oblige them to love one another, was, to excite them to the Love of God, upon the Consideration of his great Love to them. For, saith he Verse 20. *If a Man say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar ; because Light it self is not more inseparable to the Sun, than Brotherly Love is to the Love of God.* So that, unless we render ἀγαπᾶμεν αὐτὸν, *we should love him*, as we shall evacuate the Necessity of the Apostle's Counsel, so we shall disturb the Order and Method of his Argument. For if we render it *indicatively*, *We love him*, it will thence necessarily follow, that we shall also love one another, and so there would be no need of the Apostle's Counsel, and then the Words will be wholly impertinent to the Argument : Which, as I have shewed, is to excite us to the Love of God, and thereby to engage us to love one another : But what need he excite us to do that, which he himself confesses we did already ? If therefore we render the Word *subjunctively*, as it seems most reasonable we should, this will be the Sence of the Text, *We are bound in Duty to love God, because he first loved us.* According to which Sence, here is,

First, A Duty, We ought to love God.

Secondly, A Reason of it, because he first loved us.

1. I begin with the Duty, We ought to love him. In handling of which, I shall do these Two Things :

1. Shew you what it is to love God.

2. In what Degrees and Measures we are bound to love him. And in explaining what this Love of God is, I shall shew you,

First,

First, Wherein the *Being* and *Essence* of it consists.

Secondly, What are its Essential Characters and Properties.

1. Wherein the *Being* and *Essence* of our Love of God consists? To which I answer in general, that this Love of God consists in a *rational, fixed, affecting* Delight and Complacency in the Divine Goodness and Perfections. But that we may the better understand the Nature of this *Heavenly* Virtue, and more exactly distinguish it from those *wretched Counterfeits* that commonly usurp its Name, and are too too often mistaken for it; it will be necessary to explain the several Terms whereof its Definition is composed.

1. Therefore, I say, 'tis a *Delight* and *Complacency*.
2. It is a *Rational* one.
3. A *Fixed*.
4. An *Affecting* one.
5. 'Tis terminated on the *Divine Goodness* and *Perfections*.

1. The Love of God consists in *Delight* and *Complacency*. And indeed, this is the proper Act of Love, as it is distinguish'd from all other Passions. For we find by Experience, that the first Act of our Minds, upon the Apprehension of a *lovely* Object, is Delight and Complacency in the View or Contemplation of it: And when any Amiable Object presents it self to our Sense, or to our Minds or Fancies, it causes our Thoughts to pause and stay themselves a while upon it, till we have view'd it round about, and drawn its Picture in our Minds; and when we have done, the very first Expression of our Love to it, is to be well-pleas'd with the Contemplation of it; and while we review it over and over, to be sweetly ravish'd and delighted with the charming Prospect of its Beauty. And from this prime and essential Act of Love arises all those consequent Affections of *Hope*, *Benevolence*, and *Desire* of Fruition: For the Reason why we wish well to, hope for, or desire to enjoy any Object, is, because we are well-pleas'd with it, and do find a sweet Content and Satisfaction in that Picture or *Idea* of it, which we have drawn upon our own Minds. So that the very *Essence* of Love, you see, consists in a *Well-pleasedness*, arising from the apprehended Goodness and Congruity of the Thing beloved; and 'tis merely by Accident, that there is any other Emotion intermingled with this *grateful* Affection. For if it were not for the Want of what we love, if there were no Distance between *us* and the Objects of our Affection, our Love would be all but one *pure continued* Act of *Complacency* and *Delight*: For if all our Needs were *fully* satisfied, we should love without either Desire or Hope; both which imply Want and Absence from the Objects of our Love: Which is a plain Evidence, that *Complacency* is the very *Essence* of Love; since there may be Love without *Hope*, or *Desire*, or any other Passion mingled with it; but without *Complacency* there can be none. 'Tis true, the Degrees of Love's Complacencies are much greater in the Fruition of its Objects, than they are in the Pursuit of 'em; but still 'tis of the same kind: For 'tis the Delight we take in an Object, that makes us desire to enjoy it; but in the Enjoyment, our Desire expires into an higher Degree of Delight and Satisfaction. For Desire and Delight are only the *Wings* and *Arms* of Love; *those* for Pursuits, and *these* for Embraces: But 'tis the *Arms* that give the *Wings* both Motion and Rest; the Delight we take in the Objects of our Love, that both inflames and quenches our Desire. So that though in this indigent State *Hope* and *Desire* are inseparable to our Love; yet that is by Accident: But as for its *Essence* and Definition, it wholly consists of *Delight* and *Complacency*. And therefore, if our Love of God hath the common Notion of Love in it, as questionless it hath, it must necessarily consist in our being *well-pleased* and *delighted* in the Beauty, and Goodness, and Perfection of his Nature. And accordingly, we find in Scripture, that our Love to God, and God's Love to us, is expressed by delighting in one another. So Prov. 3. 12. *For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, even*

even as a Father the Son in whom he delighteth, i. e. whom he loves. So also our Love to God is expressed by delighting in him, Psal. 37. 4. *Delight thy self also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the Desires of thine Heart.*

2. The Love of God is a *Rational* Delight and Complacency in him; by which it is distinguished from those *sensible* Emotions of *Bodily* Passion which many times are nothing else but the *natural* Effects of an *over-beated* Fancy. For I make no doubt, but a Man may be wrapt even into an *Extasie* of *sensible* Delight and Complacency in God; that is, upon an *amiable* Representation of God, his Spirits may be made to flow in a *sweet* and *placid* Torrent to his Heart; and by their *nimble* Motions about it, to *sooth* and *tickle* it into a most *sensible* Pleasure, till it opens and dilates its Orifices, and the *grateful* Flood breaks in and drowns it in Delight and Ravishment. And yet in all this *mighty* Storm and Commotion of Passion, there may not be the *least* Spark of sincere Love to God: For all this not only may be, but many times is nothing else, but the mere *Mechanism* and *Natural* Effect of a warm and vigorous Fancy; which being flushed with such *brisk* and *active* Spirits as are most apt to be figured into *amorous* Phantasies and *Idea's*, can with these, without any Assistance from Reason, raise great Commotions of Joy in the Heart; especially, where the Temper is *soft*, and the Passions *ease* to be wrought upon. And of the Truth of this the *Histories* of the *Devoto's* of all *Religions* will furnish us with *sufficient* Experiments. For even among the *Turkish* and *Heathen* Saints, there are as *notorious* Instances of these *sweet* Incomes and Manifestations, as among *our own*; and the same *sensitive* Complacencies which ours too often mistake for the *Sealings* and *Witness* of the Spirit, they frequently experience in their Communion with *Mahomet*, *Bacchus*, and *Apollo*. So that, to conclude that we love God from those *Corporeal* Passions, is very *unsafe* and *dangerous*; and we may almost as certainly judge of the Hunger of our Souls after Righteousness, by the Hunger of our Bodies after Bread; as of the Love of our Souls to God, by our *Bodily* Ravishments and Passions. For *Bodily* Passion differs according to the Temper of the Body; *some* Tempers are so *soft* and *impressive*, that the most *frivolous* Fancy will affect them; *others* so *hard* and *sturdy*, that the *greatest* Reason will hardly move them; and consequently, Persons of this Temper, though they should love God much more than the *other*, and have a much *higher* Esteem of, and more *rational* Complacency in his *Divine* Perfections; yet will have much *less* of *Corporeal* Passion intermingled with it. I do not deny, but even this *sensitive* Passion, when prudently managed, may be of *great* Advantage to a *Rational* Love: For the Passions being *soft* and *ease*, and apt to follow the Motions of the Soul, do naturally *intend* and *quicken* them, and render them more *vigorous* and *active*, and we have very much Cause to *bless* God even for that *sensitive* Joy and Complacency which accompanies our Love to him; since this, I doubt not, is many times excited by his own *blessed* Spirit, to *quicken* and *invigorate* our *rational* Affection, and render it more *active* and *vivacious*. But that which I aim at, is only this, if possible to beat Men off from measuring the *Strength* or *Weakness*, the *Truth* or *Falshood* of their Love to God, by any *Corporeal* Passion, whatsoever; since Men may, we see, and many times have a vehement Passion without any Reason; and all those *Ticklings* and *Ravishments* of Heart which too many Men mistake for the Love of God, are very often nothing else but the *necessary* Effects of a *chafed* and *over-beated* Fancy. But that which is really the Love of God, is always founded in a *Rational* Conviction of the Beauty and Goodness of his Nature, and proceeds from an *high* Esteem and *profound* Veneration of his Perfections. For no Man loves God, but can give very good Reason why he loves him: He is not moved by a *Musical* Tone, or a *gaudy* Metaphor, or an *unaccountable* Impulse of Fancy; but by the *real* Charms and Attractions of the *Divine* Goodness and Perfection; which darting through his Mind, like the Sun-beams through a *Burning-glass*, have kindled his Affections, and made him love with *infinite* Reason: So that 'tis his *Understanding* that *enamours* his *Will*; and that which makes him a Lover of God, is the *deep* Sense of his Reason, how much he deserves to be beloved. He hath fer-
ouly

ously considered, how lovely God is in himself, how *kind* and *loving* unto all his Creation, and what *particular* Obligation God hath laid upon him to return him Love for Love; and this gives Fire to his Love, and affects his Will with Delight and Complacency: And though perhaps, he may not feel those *passionate* Soothings and Expansions of Heart, which *sensitive* Joy is wont to produce; yet he finds himself highly pleased with God, and his Will acquiesces in the Thought of his Goodness and Perfections, with a *Calm* and *even* Complacency: And thus his Will is inflamed with the *purest* Light of his Understanding, and his Love is nothing else but the *warm* Reflection of his Reason. Thus Psal. 116. 1. *I love the Lord*, saith David; and then he goes on to enumerate the *real* and *important* Reasons why he loved him; *because he hath inclined his Ear, &c.* And in 1 Cor. 8. 3. *If any Man love God, the same, i. e. God, is known of him*; intimating, that all true Love of God is founded in the Knowledge of him.

3. The Love of God is a *fixed*, as well as *rational* Complacency in him; by which I distinguish this *Heavenly* Affection from those *short* and *transitory* Fits of Love, that like Flashes of Lightning, *come and go, appear and vanish* in a Moment. For thus, upon some *affecting* Providence, or *passionate* Representation of the *Divine* Goodness, it is very ordinary for Men to be chased into an *amorous* Fit, and touched with very *tender* Resentments of the Loveliness and Love of God; so that at present they seem to be in Raptures of Affection, and, with the *Spouse in the Canticles*, to be *wondrous sick of Love*; but alas! It commonly proves but a sudden Qualm, that after a *Pang* or *two* goes over, and so they are well again immediately: For upon their *next* Encounter with Temptation, or Intermixture with *secular* Affairs, their *hot* Love begins to languish, and quickly dies into a *cold* Indifferency; and notwithstanding all the Reasons and Obligations that they have to the contrary, their *fickle* Hearts unwind again, and by Degrees decline and sink into their *old habitual* Aversion to God and Goodness; which is a *plain* Evidence, that that which at first lookt like the Love of God in them, was only a *sudden* Blush of Passion, and not the *true* Complexion of their Souls. For when once a Man is brought to love God upon Principles of Reason and Consideration, 'tis much more *difficult* to extinguish this, than any *Vertue* whatsoever; because of all the *Vertues of Religion*, this is founded in the *greatest* Reason, and accompanied with the *strongest* Pleasure. For Love it self consisting in *Delight* and *Complacency*, where the Object of it is an *infinite* God, there is not only *infinite* Reason to Love, but *infinite* Occasion of Pleasure and Complacency. When therefore our Love of God is back'd with so much Reason, and sweetned with so much Pleasure; how is it possible, we should extinguish it, without doing the *greatest* Violence to our selves? For I am verily persuaded, that one of the hardest *moral* Changes that can be made upon a *Rational* Creature, is, from a Lover, to become an Enemy to God, For wheresoever the *Heavenly* Affection is, it sweetens and endears it self by its own *appendent* Pleasures, which are in themselves a *sufficient* Counter-charm against all Temptations to the contrary. So that when once it is kindled in the Soul, like a *subtil* Flame, 'twill by Degrees *insinuate* farther and farther, till it hath eaten into the Center of the Soul, and turned it all into its *own* Substance. Wherefore, this we may certainly conclude upon, that he who can suddenly or easily entertain an Aversion to God and Goodness, did never truly Love: For Love, saith the *Wise Man*, is *strong as Death*, and many Waters cannot quench it, Cant. 8. 6, 7. Wheresoever it lights it clings, and can never be torn away again, without violent Spasms and Convulsions. So that whatsoever Passion we may have for God, we can never conclude it to be *heartly* Love, till it fixes and settles in our Souls; till our Wills are *habitually* pleased with God, and do entertain the Thoughts of his Love and Loveliness, with a *constant* Complacency and Delight; and then we may venture to call it Love, and to rejoyce in the Nativity of this *Heavenly* Flame with us.

4. 'Tis an *affecting* Delight and Complacency in God ; by which I distinguish it from a *mere* Liking and *naked* Approbation. For God is a Being so infinitely *amiable* and *benevolent*, that 'tis impossible almost for any *Reasonable* Creature to know him, and not *like* and approve of him. But though in all Approbation there is *some* Degree of Complacency ; yet there is no doubt, but a Man may approve of what he doth not love ; and there is no doubt, but there are many Men that do approve of God as the most *Glorious* and *Excellent* of Beings, and the most *worthy* of Love and Veneration, who yet have not one Spark of *real* Love towards him. For thus St. Paul, we find, when he was a *Jew* in Religion, approved of the Law as *holy, and just, and good*, Rom. 7. 12. and that in this Approbation of his, there was some Degree of Complacency and Delight : For, saith he, *I delighted in the Law of God according to the inward Man*, Verſ. 22. but all this while he was very far from having any *real* Love and Affection for it: For in the next Verse he tells us, that he had a *Law in his Members warring against the Law of his Mind* ; that is he had an *inward* Repugnancy and Aversion against this *excellent* Law, which his Reason did approve of as *holy, and just, and good*; and no Degree of *true* Love could consist with such an Aversion. And there is no doubt, but most Men who have *right* Conceptions of God, do in their Mind and Reason much approve of, and delight in the Perfection of his Law ; and yet their Wills are as repugnant and averse to the Holiness and Purity of the *one*, as St. Paul's then was to the Justice and Goodness of the *other*. Wherefore, to constitute us *true* Lovers of God, it is *necessary*, that our *Approbation* of, and *Delight* and *Complacency* in him, should be such as doth powerfully affect our Wills, and reconcile them to the Nature of God. For whilst our Wills are averse to that *immaculate* Purity and Goodness which is so *inseparable* to his Nature, it is impossible we should heartily love him ; and though in our Minds we may approve of him as a most *Glorious* and *Excellent* Being ; yet in our Hearts we shall still retain a *secret* Antipathy against him. And I doubt not, but the *Devils* themselves do so far approve of God, as to acknowledge him altogether *amiable* and *lovely* : For if they do not, I am sure they are very *shallow* Spectators ; but yet we see this Approbation of theirs accompanied with an inveterate Rancour and Enmity against him. And till our Wills are so *affected* by our Reason, as to consent and *echo* to its Approbations, to take Complacency in that divine Purity, which our Reason acknowledges to be the Crown and Ornament of God ; whilst we reverence him in our Minds, we hate and despise him in our Affections. So that he only is a Lover of God, whose Will is reconciled to *true* Goodness.

5. And Lastly, This Love must be terminated on the *proper* Goodness and Perfections of God ; and hereby I distinguish it from that Love which we *too* commonly terminate upon a God of *our own* making. For it is very ordinary with Men to set up *Idols* and *false* Representations of God in their Minds, and then fall down and worship them: And it is no *great* Wonder, if they are extremely fond of these Idol Divinities of their own making, since commonly they are nothing else but the Pictures and Images of themselves. *Thou thoughtst*, saith God to those profligate Persons, *that I was such a one as thy self*, Psal. 50. 21. Men have always been prone to cast all their *Idea's* of God in the Mould of their *own* Tempers, and to fashion the Divinity whom they Worship, according to the Model of their *own* Inclinations. Thus Men of ungovernable and imperious Tempers, are apt to represent God in their *own* Likeness, a Being that governs *himself* and *others* by a mere *blind omnipotent* Self-will, that wills Things, merely because he wills them, and is no way concerned to regulate his *own* Motions by any *antecedent* Rules of Justice, Wisdom, or Goodness. So also Men of wrathful and revengeful Tempers are apt to look upon God as a *froward, furious, and implacable* Being ; that is to be pleased, or displeased with Trifles ; that *frowns*, or *smiles*, as the Humour takes him ; that when the *froward* Fit is upon him, breathes nothing but Revenge and Fury, and whose Love and Hatred is *fickle* and *mutable*, and never *constant* to the same Reasons. And to name no more, thus Men of *fond*

and *indulgent* Natures are apt to represent God to themselves, as one that dotes invincibly on those who have once the Luck to be his Favourites; and in *Christ*, at least, will hug their very Deformities, and connive at their *greatest* Treasons and Rebellions. And since these *false* Representations that Men make of God, are nothing but the Reflections of their *own* Images, in loving him, they only love themselves; and 'tis no wonder that they are more devoutly affected towards such an *imaginary* Divinity, than towards the *true* God himself clothed with his *own* Attributes, and circled about with his *own* Rays of *unstained* and *immaculate* Glory; since the *former* is nothing but their *own* Shadow, which *Narcissus* like they gaze upon, and fall in love with. But whatsoever Love we may bestow upon these *false* Representations, it is not terminated upon God; but on the *Spectres* and Images of our Fancies, which have nothing of God about them but the Name. Wherefore to constitute our Love truly Divine, it is *necessary* that it should respect God as he is in himself, and not as he seems to be in those *disfigured* Idols of our own Fancies. We must blot out of our Minds all these *false* Conceptions, which, like the *Æthiopian* Idols, are nothing but *our own* Resemblance, and *portrait* him in all those *fair* Ideas wherein he hath represented himself unto us; and when we have righted him in our own Opinions, and formed such Notions of him as are agreeable to his *native* Perfections; then we must love him for what we see in him, even for the *Mercy* and *Goodness*, the *Righteousness* and *Purity* of his Nature. For unless we love these his *moral* Perfections, which are indeed, the only Objects of Love in him, all our *kind* Pretences are *base* Flatteries, and instead of him, we only Love a *Mock-God* of *our own* making. And thus I have shewed you at large, wherein the Essence of this Heavenly Vertue, our Love of God consists. But because Things are better understood by their *essential* Characters and Properties, than by their *naked* Essences, and we may much more easily discern whether we truly love God or no, by the *former*, than by the *latter*,

2. I proceed in the next Place to shew you, what are the *essential* Properties and Characters of our Love of God: And these are to be fetch'd from the Nature of Love in general; the Properties whereof, when it is determin'd on a Person, are chiefly these four:

1. *Benevolence* to the Person beloved.
2. *Desire* of enjoying him.
3. *Imitation* of his Perfections.
4. *Conformity* to his Will.

1. *Benevolence* is an *essential* Property of our Love of God: By which, I do not mean, wishing of any *additional* Good or Happiness to God, which yet he wants: For that is Extravagance, to wish that a Being, who is infinitely happy, should be more happy than he is; since his Happiness would not be *infinite*, if it could admit of Addition or Increase. By our *Benevolence* to God therefore, I only mean, our *heartly* Desire that he may be pleased by our selves and others; that all his Creation may conspire to *serve* and *glorify* him in that Method which he hath prescribed; and that his Will may be done upon *Earth*, as it is in *Heaven*. And this must necessarily be the *Heartly* Wish of every *sincere* Lover of God: And when he sees himself defeated of his Wish, by the wicked Lives and Manners of Men; when he considers, how God is offended every Day, how his Authority is *affronted*, his Laws *trampled* on, his Name *vilified* and *blasphemed*, by bold and insolent Sinners, he cannot forbear grieving at it, to see *him* his Soul loves, loaded with so many Indignities and Dishonours. For thus did *David*, that great Lover of God; *Rivers of Tears run down mine Eyes, because Men keep not thy Law*, Psal. 119. 136. So that what the brave *Portia* said to her dear *Brutus*, *νοί-
ρον. εὐχόμενα δὲν, ἡγίον. π. ἀναστροφῆς*, that can every Lover of God say; *Lord! Thou knowest, that I sympathize in all thy Pleasures and Displeasures; when thou art pleased, I rejoyce; and when thou art offended I am grieved.*

2. Ano-

2. Another Property of Divine Love, is, an *earnest* Desire of enjoying God. For so when we love a Friend, we desire to enjoy as much of him as we are able; that is, we would fain be more *intimately* acquainted with him; we would love him more, and be more beloved by him, and resemble him in all those *amiable* Qualities for which we love and admire him. And thus, if we have chosen God for our Friend, we shall still be breathing after a more *intimate* Fruition of him; our Thoughts will be often employ'd in the Contemplation of his *Beauty* and *Glo-ry*; and our Minds will be perpetually longing after a clearer Knowledge of, and more intimate Acquaintance with him. We shall never think we love him sufficiently; and never think we can do enough for to *endear* our selves to his Fa-vour; but shall always feel in our selves, both want of Love to him, and want of Desert to be loved by him. We shall incessantly covet, more and more to resem-ble him in those adorable Perfections for which we love him; that so, if it were possible, he might have the same Reason to love *us*, as we have to love *him*. We shall earnestly *hunger* and *thirst* after Righteousness, and vehemently wish, that all those amiable Characters of *Purity* and *Justice*, *Mercy* and *Goodness*, for which we do admire and love him, were more fairly imprinted on our own Natures; that so by partaking of these Perfections, we may grow more and more *god-like*, till we are arrived to a most perfect Resemblance and Conformity of Na-tures with him. Thus to enjoy God, must needs be the Desire of every *true* and *heartly* Lover of him. And indeed, this is the only Enjoyment we are capable of: For we cannot enjoy God's *Essence*, because we cannot possess it, it being neither *communicated* nor *communicable*; and therefore, all that our En-joyment of him can include, is, to know, and to love, and be beloved by him; and to resemble him in those *charming* Beauties of Purity and Goodness, which render him so infinitely lovely: And it is essential to every faithful Lover of him, thus to desire to enjoy him.

3. Imitation of his Perfections is another essential Property of Love to him: And *this* is necessarily *Consequent* to the *former*: For if we love God, it is for the *Good* he doth us, or for the Beauty and Loveliness of his Nature. If we love him for the Good he doth us, we must needs be sensible that it is a lovely Thing to do *good*; and this must strangely incline us to imitate him in doing all the *Good* we are able. If we love him for the Beauty and Excellency of his Na-ture, we cannot but desire to be like him; because whatsoever we esteem lovely in *another*, we desire to partake of, out of love to *our selves*; and if we desire to partake of what is lovely in *another*, that must needs engage us to imitate him, since we have no other Way to partake of another's Excellencies but only by a *con-stant* Imitation of them. So that 'tis impossible we should love God for the Beau-ty and Perfection of his Nature, and not *heartily* desire to partake of it; and 'tis impossible we should *heartily* desire to partake of it, and not endeavour to tran-scribe it, by a *constant* and *vigorous* Imitation. So that whatsoever *good* Reason we love God for, it must necessarily terminate in our Imitation of those *amiable* Actions or Perfections for which we love him: And therefore for any Man to pretend to love God, while he acts contrary to the Reasons for which he loves him, is plainly to *contradict* himself, and *baffle* his own Pretensions. For to say, that I love God for doing *Good*, or for being *just*, *holy*, and *benevolent*, while I take no Care to do *good* my self; but take Pleasure in *Impurity*, *Injustice*, or *Unchari-tableness*, is to say, that I love him for those Things, which I declare, I do not love. If therefore we heartily love God as we pretend to do, it will be *visible* in our Imitation of him: For unless we endeavour to be *pure* as he is *pure*, and *holy* as he is *holy*, and *just* and *merciful* as he is *just* and *merciful*; all our Pretensions of Love to him, are Cheats and fulsome Hypocrisie.

4. And Lastly, Compliance with the Will of God, is another *essential* Character and Property of our Love to him. For if we sincerely love a Person, we must needs desire to please him, that so thereby we may endear our selves to him; and if we really desire to please him, to be sure, we shall readily comply with his Will in whatsoever is *just* and *reasonable*. And hence the *Scripture* makes our

Obedience to the Will of God, *essential* to our Love of him: *For this*, saith St. John, *is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments*, 1 Joh. 5. 3. *And this is Love, that we walk after his Commandments*, 2 Epist. 6. *If ye love me*, saith our Saviour, *keep my Commandments*, Joh. 14. 15. that is, give me this Token that ye love me: For without this, I can never believe that you have any real Kindness for me, whatsoever Pretensions you may make: For so Ver. 23. he adds, *If any Man love me, he will keep my Commandments*; intimating, that between our Love of, and Obedience to him, there is a *necessary* and *inseparable* Connection. So that we may as soon be Men without *Risibility*, as Lovers of God without sincere Submission to his Will. For Lovers have *one* Will and *one* Soul; they conspire in the same Designs, and drive at the same Interests; their Affections are perfect *Unizons*, and do in the same *Likes* and *Dislikes* resound and eccho to one another; and so far as they love, there is such a perfect Agreement between them, that they seem mutually to lend and borrow *Wills* and *Souls* with one another. And so, if we love God, there will be a sweet Harmony between *our* Wills and *his*; at least, so far as we love him: For if we love him, we shall love to please him, by complying in all Things with his *Heavenly Will*, and rejoyce that we are able to do any thing, that we are sure, will be *acceptable* in his Eyes, and certainly endear us to his most tender Affection. Whilst therefore we live in *wilful* Disobedience and Opposition to his *Heavenly Will*, all our Pretences of Love to him are rank Dissimulations; and like the Kisses of Judas, are only Prefaces to succeeding *Treasons* and *Rebellions*. And thus you see wherein the Essence of our Love to God consists, and what are its essential Properties: By a serious Review of which, you may easily conclude, whether in Reality, you are Lovers of God, or no.

2. I now proceed to the next Enquiry, namely, what Measures and Degrees of *this* Love are Matter of indispensable Duty to us. For Answer to which, we must consider, that *this*, as well as the *other Vertues* of Christianity, are required of us by a *twofold Law*; the First is the Law of Perfection, the Second the Law of Sincerity: Both of which it will be necessary to explain, before we can exactly determine what Degrees and Measures of Love to God are Matter of *indispensible* Duty.

1. *First* therefore, there is a *Law of Perfection*, which requires the utmost Degrees of every Christian Vertue that in the several *States* and *Periods* of our Lives we are capable of attaining. For thus we are enjoined, not only *to do*, but *to abound in the Work of the Lord*; not only *to have Grace*, but *to grow in it*; *to perfect Holiness in the Fear of God*, and *be perfect, as our Father in Heaven is perfect*. And indeed, the Nature of God is the only Standard of that *Perfection* whereunto we must aspire; and we are still bound to be growing on, till we are infinitely Holy: Which, because our Finite Natures can never arrive to in any Period of Duration, therefore I doubt not, but it will be our Duty to be growing on *eternally*. So that this *Law* having prescribed no *Limits* to the Degrees of our Growth in Vertue, hath thereby cut out Work enough to employ our Faculties for ever. Not that we are Sinners against this *Law* so long as we are *short* or *defective* of the utmost Degree of *Perfection*: For it requires of us no more than what is within our present Possibility; and our Possibility encreases together with our Improvements. When we have but one single *Degree of Vertue*, it is no Sin against the *Law of Perfection*, that we do not immediately leap to *six* or *seven*; because it is not in our Power; and no *Law* can oblige a Man to that which is impossible: But when we have acquir'd *one* Degree, we have Power to acquire a *second*; and when we have acquir'd *that*, we have Power to acquire a *third*; and so on *ad infinitum*: And consequently, our Obligation to be more and more *perfect*, increases according to the Improvement of our Power. A *Babe in Christ*, or *Beginning in Religion*, hath not the Strength and Power of a Man; that is, of one that hath made a considerable Progress; and consequently, he is not oblig'd by this *Law* to the same *Degree of Growth* and *Progress*: But whatsoever Degree is within his Power, in the *different* Periods of his Growth and Progress, that he is actually oblig'd to; and while he continues *defective* in it, he sins against the *Law of Perfection*. So that in short, *this Law* requires us to be in all respects as good in the several Stages of our Christian

stian Progress as at present 'tis possible for us to be ; and so far as we fall short of any Attainment that is within our Power, we are guilty of *violating its righteous Obligation*. 'Tis true, *this Law* doth not *oblige* us, under the Pain of *eternal Damnation* : And indeed, if it did, no Flesh could be saved ; since there never was any *mere Man*, but might have possibly been better than he was, had he been so *diligent* as to improve himself to the *utmost Degree* of his *Power*. The *proper Sanction* therefore of *this Law* is *this*, that we should actually do all the *good*, and acquire all the *Degrees of Vertue* that are at *present* within our Power, under the Pain of losing some Degree of *Happiness* in the *other World*, which otherwise we should have attained ; which is no more than what naturally *follows* upon all *sinful Defects*. For every *sinful Defect* is a Privation of some Degree of *Goodness* ; and *Goodness* is so essential to *Happiness*, that there cannot be a Privation of the *one*, without a Diminution of the *other*. But besides those Defects of *Happiness* that are naturally *consequent* to our Defects of *Vertue*, the Scripture plainly assures us, that God *himself* will subtract from our Reward *hereafter*, in proportion to our *moral Defects* and Non-improvements in *this Life* : For he which *soweth sparingly*, saith the Apostle, *shall reap sparingly* : And he which *soweth bountifully*, *shall reap also bountifully*, 2 Cor. 9. 6. And Luke 19. our Saviour, by way of a Parable, doth expressly teach us, that our Reward shall be *apportioned* to the Degrees of our Improvement : For there he represents *himself* as a Master coming to take Account of his Servants, among whom he had entrusted a Stock of *Ten Pounds*, giving every one of them an equal Share : The First, by an extraordinary Diligence, had improv'd his *Pound* into *Ten*, and he is rewarded accordingly with the Government of *Ten Cities*, Ver. 16, 17. The other had been *faithful*, tho' not altogether so *diligent* ; and by his *one Pound* had gained *Five* ; and proportionably is made Lord of *Five Cities*, Ver. 18, 19. By which he *plainly declares*, that so much as we come short of the utmost Improvement in Vertue, so much will he subtract from the utmost Degree of our Reward. So that in short, the Sence of the *Law of Perfection* is *this* ; as thou wouldest not incur the Forfeiture of some *Degrees* of thy *Happiness* in the *other Life*, be sure to employ thy utmost Diligence in improving *thyself* in every Grace and Vertue of Religion. But then,

2. There is the *Law of Sincerity*, which only requires the Being and Reality of all *Christian Graces* and *Vertues* in *us*, together with the *proper Acts* and *Exercises* of them, according as we have Opportunity ; and doth no farther forbid the Deficiency and Non-improvement of them, than as it is *gross*, and *continued*, and *inconsistent* with Sincerity. Now the Reality of these *Christian Vertues* in *us*, consists in the universal and prevalent Consent of our *Wills* to them, to practise them as often as Occasion requires, and not wilfully to commit any contrary Sin upon any Occasion whatsoever : And so long as *this Consent continues* and *prevails* in our Practice, we are *just* in the Eye and Judgment of the *Law*, whatsoever *Weakness* and *Defects*, *Surprizes* and *Inadvertencies* we may otherwise be guilty of. For he who hath so submitted his Will to God, as to consent effectually without any Reserve to obey him, is evidently *cordial* and *sincere*, though perhaps he may be weak and imperfect. For as he is *sincerely chaste*, whose Will doth prevalently consent to the *Law of Chastity* ; so he is universally a *vertuous Man*, whose Will doth prevalently consent to the *universal Law of Vertue* ; because that very Consent of his includes the Being and Reality of all *Vertues*, though not the utmost *Degrees* and *Improvements* of them. This therefore is the utmost that the *Law of Sincerity* requires, that we should universally and prevalently consent to the Will of God, so as not wilfully to neglect any Duty which he hath enjoined, and practise any Sin which he hath forbid : But though *this* be all it requires ; yet *this* it exacts under the severest Penalty in the World, even that of *Eternal Death* and *Condemnation* ; only *this Proviso* it admits of, that if we do repent and amend, *this dreadful Obligation* shall be null and void. So that the great Difference between the *Law of Perfection* and the *Law of Sincerity* is only *this*, that the Penalty of the *latter* is much more severe than that of the *former* ; but the Duty of the *former* is much more large and comprehensive than that of the *latter*.

Having thus briefly explained to you these *two Different* Laws by which the Love of God, as well as all *other* Vertues, are made our Duty; this, I conceive, will be of very *great* Use in stating the *due* Bounds and Measures either of Love or any *other* Vertue God requires of us: We must understand by what Laws it is that he requires it, and what Measures of it those Laws do require. *First*, therefore we will consider what Degree of Love to God is required by the Law of *Perfection*. *Secondly*, what Degree of it is required by the Law of *Sincerity*.

1. What Degree of Love to God is required by the Law of *Perfection*? To which I answer, that it requires all that Love which in the several Periods of our Growth and Progress in Religion, we are able to render him. For it is to be considered, that in this *corrupt* Estate, both our *Understandings* and *Wills* are so *darkened* and *depraved*, that we do not apprehend the *thousandth* Part of those Degrees of Loveliness that are in him; and if we did, yet our Affections are so inveigled by these *sensual* Goods, among which we are placed, that we are not able to render him a *thousandth* Part of that Love which those Degrees of Loveliness we do apprehend in him do deserve. But there is no *just* Law can expect of us beyond what we are able to perform; and therefore this Law of *Perfection* being *just* and *righteous*, cannot be supposed to exact more Love to God from us, than we have Strength and Power (all our Circumstances considered) to render unto him. So that he who doth his utmost to understand, and affect himself with the Beauty and Loveliness of God, and to subtract his Love from *sensual* Good, and terminate it on God, is a *just* and *innocent* Man in the Judgment of the Law of *Perfection*. From whence it is evident, *First*, That no Man can be bound by any Law to love God as much as he deserves to be beloved; because he being infinitely *lovely* in himself, is the *adequate* Object of an *infinite* Love, which no *infinite* Being is *capable* of. *Secondly*, That no Man is bound to understand how much he deserves to be beloved; because *this* is beyond the Comprehension of any *infinite* Understanding, especially of ours, which are so *diminished* in their Apprehensions of *spiritual* and *invisible* Beings. *Thirdly*, That in this State no Man is bound *actually* to love God so far as he apprehends Reason to love him: This indeed, we ought to endeavour after; but while we continue in these *Bodies*, it is impossible for us so *absolutely* to abstract our Love from *Sense* and *sensual* Things, as not to be in the least diverted by it from loving him to that Degree in which we know he deserves to be beloved. It is, I confess, our Imperfection, that our Love to him is not *proportionate* to our Apprehensions of his Loveliness: But besides this, we have many other Imperfections, that are our Misery indeed, but not our Sin. For no Imperfection is any farther our Sin, than 'tis in our Power to correct it; and there is no true Lover of God did ever attain to that Degree of Love, as not to see *great* Reason to wish that it were in his Power still to love him more: Which is a *plain* Evidence in every Period of his *imperfect* State, that our Affections are so intangled by these *sensible* Goods about us, that we are not able to raise them to such a Degree of Love as is *proportionate* to our Apprehensions of his Loveliness. *Fourthly*, and *Lastly*, That no Man is bound to love God in the *several* Periods of his Growth and Progress in Religion, with the same Degree of Affection: For by the Law of *Perfection* a Man is always bound to love him as much as he can; but in the *Progress* of our Religion we can love him much *more* than in the *Beginning*. For the *more* we know of God, and the *more* our Affections are dis-engaged from these *sensual* Goods the *more* Power and Ability we have to love him; and we are equally bound to love him as much as we can, when we have *ten* Degrees of Power, as we are when we have but *one*; and consequently, 'tis as *great* an Offence against the Law of *Perfection*, not to love him as much as we can, when we have *more* Power to love him, as it was when we had *less*. So that by this Law we are always bound to love him as much as we are able; and to be always *augmenting* our Ability of loving him, and always to love him *more* and *more*, as our Power and Ability increases; and under this *sweet* Obligation perhaps, we shall lie to all *Eternity*. For there being
infinite

infinite Degrees of Loveliness and Amability in God, our *finite* Understandings will need an *Infinity* of Duration to discover them all ; and it would be *unreasonable* for us not to love him *more*, according as we discover *more* of the Beauty and Loveliness of his Nature. 'Tis true, in this Life the Difficulty lies not so much in discovering his Loveliness, as in affecting our Hearts with the Sense of it, and in raising our *gross* and *carnal* Affections to a Love *proportionate* to those Discoveries : And 'tis this that creates us so much Toil and Labour in the Progress of our Obedience to the Law of *Perfection* : But when once we are arrived to the *blessed* Regions of *Immortality*, our Affection being perfectly subdued to the Reason of our Minds, and *drained* and *clarified* from all its *gross* and *carnal* Love, will as naturally flame out *more* and *more* towards God, upon every new Discovery of his Beauty, as Fire doth when more *combustible* Fuel is laid upon it ; and so without any Toil or Difficulty, the *more* we *know*, the *more* we shall *love*, and so more and more *for ever*. If therefore we would know what Measures of Love to God we are obliged to by this Law of *Perfection*, the Answer is *easie*, viz. That to all *Eternity* we are bound to love him as much as we are able ; and always to love him more and more, as our Ability Increases. And this I take to be the Sence of that *comprehensive* Law of our Saviour, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength*, Mar. 12. 30. that is, thou shalt imploy thy *Faculties*, thy *Mind*, thy *Will*, and thy *Affections* to the *utmost* of thy Strength and Power, in *loving*, *delighting*, and *taking Complacency* in the Goodness, Beauty, and Perfections of God. But,

2. What Degree of Love to God is required by the Law of *Sincerity*, which is the Law by which we must stand or fall *for ever* ? So that the Sense of the Enquiry is this, what Degree of Love to God is necessary to put us into a State of *Salvation*, the *indispensible* Condition of our Salvation being nothing else but our Obedience to his Law of *Sincerity*. Now, as to this *Particular* of our Love of God, there are *two* Things which this Law exacts of us : *First*, It requires the *Being* and *Existence* of this *Heavenly* Vertue in us ; that is, it requires not only that we should not hate God, or be indifferent between Love and Hatred, in our Affection to him ; but that we should *really*, *cordially*, and *sincerely* love him. And hence those *eternal* Glories and Beatitudes in which our Salvation doth consist, are said to be *prepared by God for them that love him*, 1 Cor. 2. 9. which is a *plain* Evidence, that it is one of the Conditions or Qualifications upon which our Salvation doth depend, and consequently, an *indispensible* Duty of the Law of *Sincerity* ; and St. James expressly tells us, *that the Lord hath promised the Crown of Life to them that love him*, Jam. 1. 12. And therefore, since that Law of *Sincerity* contains the Condition of that Promise, it hence *necessarily* follows, that our Love to God is a Part of it, since that Promise is made to those that love him. Nay, so *necessary* a Part of that Law is this *excellent* Vertue, that the *Apostle* tells us, without this the most *vertuous* Actions whatsoever are insignificant Cyphers in the Account of God : For *though*, saith he, *I bestow all my Goods to feed thee Poor, and though I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing*, 1 Cor. 13. 3. where it is plain, he takes Charity in the *largest* Sence, for our Love to God and *one another*. He therefore that doth not really love God, who is not heartily *touched* and *affected* with the Sence of his Goodness and Perfection, stands condemned by the Law of *Sincerity* ; and without Repentance and Amendment, shall have no Part or Portion in the *Kingdom* of God. But then,

Secondly, This Law of *Sincerity* requires such a Degree of Love to God, as doth together with the *other* Motives of *Christianity*, effectually render us *obedient* to his Will. For, as I have shewed you, the *Scripture* every where makes our keeping his Commandments the most *essential* Property of our Love to him : For *if a Man love me*, saith our Saviour, *he will keep my Words*, Joh. 14. 23. And *who so keepeth his Word*, saith St. John, that is, his Commandments, *in him is the Love of God perfected* : That is, in him it is *real*, and *cordial*, and *sincere*, 1 Joh. 2. 5. When therefore our Love to God hath that Power over us, as together with the *other* Mo-
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tives of *Christianity*, to restrain us from the *wilful* Omission of any known Duty, or Commission of any *known* Sin, it is then perfected to that Degree which the Law of *Sincerity* exacts. But before we dismiss this Argument, it will be *necessary* to give a more *Particular* Account of it.

1. Therefore, this Law of *Sincerity* requires, that some Degree of *true* Love to God should be intermingled with the *other* Parts of our Obedience to him; because this, as I have shewn you, is one *great* and *essential* Part of that Obedience which it requires: And therefore, if out of a mere Fear of God, we should obey him in all *other* Instances; yet so long as we are defective in *this*, our Obedience will be *lame* and *partial*, and want a *great* Part of that Intireness which the Law of *Sincerity* exacts. For since it requires us to love God under the same Penalty of *eternal* Death, that it requires all its *other* Duties, we can no more be saved by it, without this *Vertue*, than without *Justice*, *Temperance* and *Chastity*: Yea, considering how *necessary* this is, both to quicken our Obedience *here*, and to qualify us for Happiness *hereafter*, we may much better spare any *Vertue* of *Religion*, than this of the Love of God. This therefore is *indispensibly necessary*, according to the Tenor of the Law of *Sincerity*, that there should be some Degree of true Love to God intermingled with the *other* Parts of our Obedience.

2. This Law of *Sincerity* exacts of us only such a Degree of Love to God, as in Conjunction with the other Motives of *Christianity*, is actually *sufficient* to enforce our Obedience. It doth not require us to love God in that *heroick* Degree, as not to need any *other* Motive to engage us to obey his Will: For if it did, no Man could be in a good State, till he were able to obey God, purely for his own Sake, without any Respect either to those *glorious* Advantages he promises, or those *endless* Torments he denounces; which requires such an *ardent* Degree of Love to him, as I doubt, few *good* Men arrive to in this Life. I know, 'tis usually said by those that handle this Argument, that to love God, above all Things, is the Degree of Love to which the Law of *Sincerity* obliges us: But either this must be a Mistake, or no Man can be good, till he is so perfect a Lover of God, as not to need any *other* Motive but that of *his own* Love, to oblige him to Obedience. For Men need no Motives to persuade them to chuse what they love *best*: And therefore, if Men love God above all, they would need no farther Motives to persuade them to chuse what he Wills and Commands, against all Persuasions to the contrary. If I love God above my self, I shall certainly chuse *his* Will before my *own*: If I love him above all my Pleasures, I shall chuse his Pleasures before my *own*; and it will be a *needless* Thing to propose Motives to persuade me to do what I like best, and chuse that which I love above all the World. So that, whilst a Man hath need of Motives to persuade him to chuse God, and prefer his Will above all Temptations; it is apparent, he loves him not above all; and consequently, according to this Doctrine, cannot be a *good* Man in the Judgment of the Law of *Sincerity*; which if it were *true*, I doubt, the List of *good* Men would be reduced to a very *small* Number. Wherefore, since loving God above all, is a *high* Strain of Piety, much above the *low* Estate of *sincere* and *true* Goodness; to make it necessary to a *good* State, must needs be very *dangerous*; since it cannot but dishearten *Beginners in Religion*, and perplex their Consciences with needless and inextricable Scruples. I confess, not to love God above all, who doth so exceed all in Degrees of Loveliness and Amability, is an Argument of *great* Imperfection, though not of Insincerity: But if my Love to him be such, as that, together with my *Hope* and *Fear*, excited by the *other* Motives of *Religion*, it effectually operates on my Will, so as to win it to an *universal* prevalent Consent to the Will of God, I know no Reason I have to judge *severely* of my main State, though I should be conscious to my self, that my Love *singly* and *apart* from those *other* Motives, had not Force enough in it to produce this *happy* Effect. This therefore, I conceive, is the *utmost* Degree of Love to God that the Law of *Sincerity* exacts, that we should so love him, as by our Love, in Concurrence with the other Arguments of *Religion*, to be effectually prevailed on to obey him.

3. The

3. The *Law of Sincerity*, exacts such a *Degree of Love* of us, as together with those *other Motives of Christianity*, is prevalent to *sincere* Obedience; and in this it differs from the *Law of Perfection*; which requires such a *Degree of Love* of us, as together with those *other Motives*, is productive of perfect unfinning Obedience. For, as I have shewed you, the *Law of Perfection* requires the *utmost* of our Possibility; and consequently, that we should love him as much as we can; and consider, and apply to our selves the *other Motives of Religion*, as well, and as closely as we are able; and then proceed upon the whole, to serve and obey God to the *utmost* of our Power and Ability; which if we do, we are perfectly *innocent* and *inculpable*: Unless you suppose, that a Man may be *blame-worthy* for not doing more than he can. But should the *Law of Sincerity* exact thus much of us, I doubt, it would exclude the *best* of Men out of the State of Goodness and Salvation: For what Man is there that doth always *love* and *obey* God to the *utmost* of his *present* Possibility? Wherefore, all that this Law can be supposed to require of us, is only such a *Degree of Love*, as is requisite to render it a *concurrent* Cause of *true sincere* Obedience; that is to say, such a Love as in Concurrence with those great *Motives* of Reward and Punishment, produces such an *hearty* Consent in us to the Will of God, as will not suffer us any longer to persist either in *careless* or *affected* Ignorance of it, or in *known* and *wilful* Disobedience to it: And there are no *Infirmities* or *Miscarriages* whatsoever *inconsistent* with such a *Degree of Love to God*, but what are also *inconsistent* with such a Consent to his *Heavenly* Will. If therefore we thus love God to the Purposes of a *sincere* Obedience, the *Law of Sincerity* acquits us; and as for our Sins of *Infirmity*, *Surprize*, or *Inadvertency*, we are *accountable* for them only to the *Law of Perfection*.

4. And Lastly, The *Law of Sincerity*, requires such a *Degree of Love to God*, as together with those *other Motives*, makes us, not only *sincere* in our Obedience, but also *careful* to improve it to *further* Degrees of Perfection. And indeed, *this* is necessarily included in the *former*: For if our Love of God, joined with the *other Arguments of Religion*, hath so far prevailed upon us as to win us to a *sincere* Consent to his *Heavenly* Will, we shall not only industriously avoid the *known* and *wilful* Violations of it; but be very careful to correct those Flaws and Imperfections that are intermixed with our Obedience to it. 'Tis true, when there is nothing but *slavish* Fear at the bottom of a Man's Obedience, that must necessarily *contract* and *shrink* upon the Sinews of his Care and Endeavours, and render him exceeding *narrow* and *stingy* in the Discharge of his Duty: For having no farther Aim than that of *his own* Security, he will do no more than what is necessary, to avoid the Danger that he stands in Fear of: And if he can but escape those *known* and *wilful* Sins that laid waste his Conscience, and expos'd him to the Wrath of God, that is the *utmost* he desires or aims at: But as for those *Miscarriages* and *sinful* Imperfections, which do only fall under the Cognizance of the *Law of Perfection*, he is not at all concerned about them. But when our Fear is intermingled with such a *Degree of Love to God*, as the *Law of Sincerity* exacts, that will make us careful, not only to avoid those *known* and *wilful* Sins that divorce us from the Favour of God; but also to endear our selves *more and more* to him, by correcting even those *smaller* Defects and Imperfections that do still adhere to our Duties and Natures: For this is plain, that no Man can heartily love God, that doth not *more and more* desire to be beloved by him; and that no Man can sincerely desire to be *more and more* beloved by God, that doth not honestly endeavour to render himself *more and more* lovely in his Eyes; that is, to reform all those *sinful* Defects and Imperfections which *stain* and *blemish* the Beauty of his Soul. Whosoever therefore contents himself with this, not to be hated by God, did never sincerely love him; and whosoever desires more than this, will as well be *careful* to correct those *smaller* Imperfections which render him less beloved of God, as to avoid those *known* and *wilful* Sins which do expose him to God's Hatred. If therefore our *Religion* doth not in some Measure improve our Natures; if it doth not render us more *patient* and *humble*, more *charitable* and *heavenly-minded*, it is a *certain*

Sign that it is not acted by Love. For if after having a long while continued in a Round of *religious* Duties, we still return to the same Point, and are in no Degree *better* than we were when we first began, it is a *plain* Token that we do not heartily desire to be more beloved of God, and consequently, that we do not love him. So that in fine, the Sum of all is this; The Law of *Perfection* requires us to love God with all our Might, and with all our Strength; that is, as much as we are able, in every Period of our *Growth* and *Progress* in *Religion*; and by how much we love him *less* than we are able, by so much *less* shall be the *future* Reward of our Love. But then for the *Law of Sincerity*, that only requires of us such a Degree of Love to him, as doth together with the other Motives of *Religion*, effectually incline us to obey him sincerely, and to endeavour to improve our Obedience into farther Degrees of Perfection; and so long as we fall short of this, we are bad Men, and the Wrath of God abides upon us. And so I have done with the First Part of the Text, We *should* or *ought* to love God.

2. I proceed now to the *second* Part, *viz.* the Reason why we ought to love him; and that is, because *he first loved us*: Which though it be but short in Words, yet is extremely *comprehensive* in Sence; containing in it such *puissant* Motives and endearing Obligations, as cannot but affect us, if we have any Spark of *Tenderness* or *Ingenuity* remaining in us. For in this Argument or Reason, these six Things are implied:

1. That he *began* in Love to us.
2. That he *began* before we could any Way deserve it.
3. That he *began to love us*, when we deserved his *Hatred*.
4. That he *began*, when he foresaw he could never make an Advantage by it.
5. He *began to love us* to such a Degree, as to think nothing *too dear* or *too good* for us.

6. That he so *began to love us*, as to condescend by all the Arts of *Importunity*, to *court* us to accept his Love. All which are very *powerful* Considerations to engage us to return him *Love for Love*.

1. He *began in Love to us*. Had he only engaged himself to *re-love* us whensoever we began to *love* him, and in the mean time remained *indifferent* in his Affection towards us; this would have been a *mighty endearing* Obligation. For the *great Majesty* of *Heaven* to take Notice of the Loves of such *poor* Worms as we; and much more, to engage himself to repay them with a correspondent Affection, is in it self a *noble* Expression of his *great* and *generous* Goodness: But that he should not only take Notice of, and return our Love, but *forestal* and *anticipate* it; that he should condescend to make the *first* Address and Tender of Love to us, is such an Expansion of Goodness, as is sufficient to inflame the most *stupid* and *insensible* Soul. For he that loves *another*, lays an Obligation upon him, and renders him extremely beholding; he lends him his Heart and Soul, which are much more *valuable* than Money; and he becomes his Creditor, and acquires a just Claim to be repaid with mutual Affection: For not to repay Love for Love, is equally *unjust* and *ungrateful*. He therefore that begins to *love*, doth thereby render the Person *beloved* his Debtor, and acquires a *just* Right to be *beloved* by him again, though he should have no *other* Pretence to, or Interest in his Affections; especially, if he be one who is much our *Superior* in all *endearing* Perfections and Accomplishments; because this must needs render his Love more *valuable*, and consequently *augment* our Obligation to *re-love* him.

When therefore the *great God* himself shall begin to love us, who doth so infinitely *excel* us in all Manner of *amiable* Perfections; how deeply are we obliged and beholding to him? What *infinite* Sums of *Love* must we owe him? If he had laid no other Obligation upon us, had neither *made*, nor *fed*, nor *cloathed*, nor *provided* for us: If he had no other Claim to our *Love* but only this, that he *first loved us*; yet this is such as we cannot frustrate, without being extremely *unjust* and *ungrateful*. For he is so much afore-hand in Kindness with us,

hath

hath so much gotten the start of us in Love, that we shall never be able to overtake him. He loved us long before we had a Being, when we existed only in his own Decree to make us Men, and to provide for our Happiness: So that now we are so far behindhand in *Arrears of Love* to him, that we shall need as well as have an Eternity to discharge them: And should we from henceforth every Moment love him more and more, to the longest imaginary Period of Duration; yet we shall still owe him all that *Eternity of Love* that was due before we began to love him. And shall we grudge to pay him a Mite, to whom we are indebted Millions? And is it not high Time for us to begin to love him now, who hath loved us so long already for nothing without the least Shadow of Requitall?

1. He began to love us, before we could any ways deserve it. For it is impossible for a Creature that owes all to God, the Fountain of its Being, to deserve any thing at his Hands; because he hath every thing from him, and so can render him nothing but what is his own already by an unalienable Propriety. But the noblest and most acceptable Sacrifice that we are able to render unto God, is our hearty and unfeigned Love; and if it were possible for us any way to deserve his Love, who is so much above us, and hath such an absolute Dominion over us, it would, doubtless, be offering up our Souls to him, inflamed with Love and Affection: For 'tis this alone that consecrates all our Services, and renders them Valuable in the Eyes of God. If Love, like an universal Soul, be not diffused throughout all our Religion, and doth not act and animate every Part of it, in God's Account all our demure Pretences are nothing but the lifeless Puppets and Images of True Religion; which, though they may speak, and move, and act like that which they represent and imitate; yet want that inward Form and Principle that gives it Life and Motion: And to have nothing of Religion, but merely the Shape and Outside, is as bad, at least, in God's Account, as to have none at all. Since therefore 'tis Love that gives Worth and Value to all our other Services, and renders them acceptable to God; it hence necessarily follows, that it self is the most grateful Thing we can render to him; and that when this is wanting, we are so far from being capable of deserving his Love, that nothing we do, can be pleasing or acceptable in his Eyes. Wherefore since he loved us before we loved him, it is plain, that it was not our Desert, but his own Goodness that first endear'd him to us: For when we did not love him, we could have neither Form nor Comeliness to attract his Love; our Love to him being the only Beauty that can render us amiable in his Eyes: So that he could have no other Motive to incline him to love us, but only the immense Benevolence of his own Nature. Since therefore he hath loved me, without any Desert of mine, can I forbear to love Him who hath deserved so well of me? If he had never expressed any Kindness towards me, yet I have infinite Reason to love him, because of the infinite Loveliness of his Nature: But when I add to this the unspeakable Love he bore me when I had neither Beauty to endear, nor Desert to oblige him; what a tender Care he took of my Welfare, and how big his Thoughts were with Designs of Kindness to me; I am not able to reflect upon my Coldness and Indifference towards him, without the greatest Shame and Confusion; especially, considering,

3. That he began to love us, when we deserv'd his Hatred. And indeed, if we consider the wretched Condition in which his Love found us when it first address'd to us, and cast its gracious Eyes upon us, we shall find sufficient Reason to wonder, that it did not immediately convert into implacable Fury. For when it first looked down on us from the Battlements of Heaven, it beheld us wallowing in our Blood, all polluted and distained with the foulest Treasons and Rebellions. It saw us unanimously engaged in an unnatural Conspiracy against the Blessed Author of our Beings; converting those very Faculties he bestowed upon us, into Weapons of Rebellion against him; and arming the Effects of his Bounty, against his Sovereign Authority. It beheld our Natures all depraved and vitiated, our Faculties all disorder'd and confus'd, our Minds surrounded with Egyptian Darkeness, our Wills byass'd with wild and irregular Inclinations, our Affections overgrown with monstrous and preternatural Lusts, and all the beautiful Structures of our Natures most miserably disfigured and deformed: And certainly, one would have thought, that

such a loathsome Spectacle as this, might have been *sufficient* to extinguish his Love for ever, and stifle all his *tender Resentments* towards us. But so *invincible* was his *Kindness* to us, that all the *Deformities* we had *superinduced* upon our Natures, all our *Unworthiness* to be *beloved* by him, all the *rude Affronts* and *Indignities* we had offered, were not able so much as for one Moment, to stop or divert the *impetuous Current* of his Goodness. But in the midst of so many Reasons that he had to hate us, he fixed his Love upon us; and notwithstanding the Continuance of those *Reasons*, doth still persist to love us; and while we are abusing of his *Kindness*, *dishonouring* his Name, and *trampling* on his Laws and Authority, he is continually *mindful* and *active*, to do us good; and doth incessantly employ his *restless Thoughts*, extend his *watchful Eye*, and exert his *powerful Arm* to contrive, and promote, and procure our Happiness; as if he were resolved to be as obstinate in Love, as we are in Unkindness; to contend with us for Victory, and if it be possible, to vanquish us with the Charms of an *invincible Kindness*. And now, methinks, it should be impossible for any one that hath but the Reason of a Man, to be so *base* and *disingenuous*, as not to be endeared by such a *victorious Love*. O blessed God! Dost thou love me, who have so many ways deserved thy *Hatred*; and can I hate thee, who hast so infinitely *merited* my Love? Have I not been long enough thine Enemy already; and hast thou not been long enough my Friend, at last to thaw my *obdurate* Enmity, and melt me into *reciprocal Kindness*? *Barbarous Heart*! Canst thou still withstand these *puissant* Endearments of *Almighty Love*, that hath so long repaid thee *Smiles* for *Affronts*, and returned thee *Favours* for *Provocations*? For shame, if thou hast any Sense of Gratitude or Modesty in thee, be at last persuaded to hearken to the Love of thy *Maker*, and to return him Love for Love.

4. He began to love us, when he could never reap the *least* Advantage to himself by it. Had we been *capable*, either of *benefiting* or *injuring* him, of *adding* to, or *subtracting* from his Happiness, his *own* Interest might have obliged him to love us, or at least, to have pretended Kindness to us, that so he might the better obtain his Ends upon us, and engage us to contribute more *freely* to his Happiness. But such a *poor* Design as this, is *inconsistent* with the Notion of a *Divinity*, which implies *infinite* Perfection, and consequently, *infinite* Happiness: And for him who is infinitely happy, to design a Contribution of *Happiness* from his Creatures, implies a Contradiction; because the very designing of a *farther Happiness*, implies a *present* Want and Insufficiency; which can have no Place in a Being that is infinitely happy already. The *Happiness* of God therefore being so *immense* and *secure*, that nothing can be added to, or subtracted from it, it is impossible he should love us, for any *Self-interest* or Advantage, it being out of the Reach of any Power whatsoever to *benefit* or *injure* him; and his Love to us can have no other Design, but only our *Happiness* and *Welfare*. He is infinitely *perfect* and *happy* in himself, and consequently, cannot be supposed to love us for his *own* Advantage; it being impossible that he, that is infinitely happy in himself, should be *capable* of receiving any Advantage from any Thing without him: So that there can be no *other* End of his Love, but only to render us *like himself*, compleatly *perfect* and happy. For when he first set his Heart upon us, and chose us his Favourites, he knew his own *Happiness* to be so *immense* and *stable*, as that he could never need our Love or Services, either to add more to it, or to *continue* and *perpetuate* it, which from *Eternity* to *Eternity*, was, and is, and always will be, commensurate to the *boundless* Capacity of his Nature. But such was his *innate* Goodness and Beneficence, as would not permit him to be happy alone, to content himself in a *solitary* Fruition of his own *essential* Beatitudes; but to gratify the *benign Inclinations* of his Nature, he must have Companions in Happiness, upon whom he may diffuse his Goodness, and imprint his own Bliss and Perfection: And 'twas only this *frank* and *generous* Motive, that first obliged him to cast an Eye of Love towards us. When we had neither *Worth* to *deserve*, nor *Power* to *requite* his *Kindness*; then did his own Benignity incline his Heart to love us, and to invite and receive us into a Participation of his *Happiness*. He knew well enough, that the
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most we are *capable* to do for him, was only to *love* and *obey*, to *praise*, and *honour*, and *adore* him; and that when we had done all this, it would be impossible for him to reap the least Advantage by it; that if we did *love* and *obey* him, the Profit would all redound to our selves; and that if we did not, our selves only would fare the worse for it: So that whether we did or no, it would be all one to him; his Happiness would be still the same, without the least Addition or Subtraction.

And yet when Things are in this Posture, when he had no *Self-Interest* to serve upon us, no Motive but his own Benignity, to endear him to us; then did he begin to love us, and to express the Yearnings of his Heart and Bowels towards us. And now how can we think of this, and not be affected with it? How can we any longer *avoid* being *captivated* with the Thoughts of such a *generous* Kindness? Consider, O my Soul, thy God gains nothing by all his *Love* to thee; but thou gainest infinitely by thy *Love* to him: By loving him, thou *glorifiest* thy self, and *crownest* thy own Desires with Happiness; but he is not one *jot* the better for loving; nor would he have been one *jot* the worse if he had never loved thee at all: And yet out of a *pure generous* Goodness, he loves thee a *thousand* times more than thou lovest thy self, or art ever able to love him; and canst thou be such a *wretched* Thing, so *lost* to all that is *ingenuous* and *modest*, as not to return him *Love* for *Love*?

5. He *began* to love us to such a Degree, as to think nothing *too dear*, or *too good* for us. Considering how *little* we deserve his *Love*, how *much* we have deserved his *Hatred*, and how *uncapable* we are to make him any *valuable* Requit; it is *sufficient* Matter of Wonder, that ever he could prevail with himself to love us in the *least* Degree; but that in the midst of so many Reasons to the contrary, he should not only *begin* to love, but to be so *liberal* of his Kindness to us, is Matter of *just* Astonishment. It was a *mighty* Kindness in him to create us what we are, and make such a *plentiful* Provision for our comfortable Subsistence here: For where-soever we direct our Eyes, whether we reflect them *inwards* upon our selves, we behold his Goodness to *occupy* and *penetrate* the Root and Center of our Beings, and discern the *lively* Characters of his Love, in the *incomparable* Frame and Structure of our Natures; or whether we extend them abroad towards the Things about us, we may perceive our selves, like *Fortunate Islands*, surrounded with an *Ocean* of Blessings, containing whatsoever is *necessary* for our Sustenance, *convenient* for our Use, and *pleasant* for our Enjoyment. And is it not *wondrous* Love in him, to make such *liberal* Provisions for such *undeserving* Guests? But this is the *smallest* Part of his Kindness: For he hath inspir'd us with immortal Minds, and stamp'd them with the most *fair Impresses* of his own *Divinity*, viz. a *Knowledge* of Truth, and a *Love* of Goodness, and a *forward Capacity* of the *highest* Perfection, and *purest* Happiness: And to fill and gratifie these our *noble* Faculties and Capacities, he hath prepared for us a *Heaven* of immortal Joys, and furnished it with all the Delights that this our *Heaven-born* Mind is *capable* of; and lest we should fall short of it, he hath sent his *blessed Son* from *Heaven* to reveal it to us, and shew us the Way thither; to die for our Sins, and obtain and *ratifie* the Promise of our Pardon, thereby to encourage us to return to our Duty and Allegiance, without which we are *incapable* of ever enjoying that *beatifical* State. And lest all this should not be sufficient, he is always *present* with us, to promote our *Happiness*; *present*, by his *Angels* to *solicit* us, and by his *Holy Spirit* to excite and *co-operate* with our Endeavours: So *extreamly careful* is he not to be defeated of his *kind Intentions* to make us *everlastingly* happy. O *blessed God*! To what a Degree must thou love us, who thinkest none of these Things *too dear* and *good* for us? That dost not think thy *Son* *too good* to redeem us, thy *Spirit* to sanctifie, thy *everlasting Heaven* to crown and reward us? And now, can our Hearts hold, when we think of this? Can we be cold and indifferent in the midst of such a *vigorous* Flame? Good God! What are we made of? What *senseless*, *stony*, *stupid* Souls do we carry about us, that can be *Love-proof* against so many Charms and Endearments, that can listen to so many Wonders of Love, with such *unconcerned*, such *unaffected*

affected Minds? Methinks, if we had but the *common* Sense and Ingenuity of Men in us, it would be impossible for us in the midst of so much *Love*, not to be melted into a *reciprocal* Kindness.

6. And Lastly, He so *began to love us*, as to condescend by all the Arts of Importunity, to court us to accept of his Love. That notwithstanding all our Unworthiness he should begin to love us, and that to so strange a Degree, is a most amazing Instance of the *infinite Benevolence* of his Nature: But that he should condescend to *address* himself to us, to court and woo us, as he doth, to accept of his Love, and to be as happy as he would have us, is enough to astonish the most *insensible* Soul, and even to dissolve a Heart of *Rock* into *Love*. For thus the *Scripture* in the most *pathetick* Strains, describes the *Addressee*s of this great Lover of Souls, borrowing *Metaphors* to express his *Love to us*, from all that is kind and loving in the Creation, even from the most melting Passions in Mankind; from the *Relentings* of Fathers, and *Ternings* of Mothers Bowels towards their *dearest* Offspring. It paints him in all the charming Postures of an *imploring*, *beseeking*, and *importunate* Lover, wooing and intreating us to be happy, even with Tears of Pity in his Eyes, with *Charms* of Love in his Mouth, and *Tenders* of Mercy in his Hands. And when with all the *Rhetorick* of his Love he can't prevail with us to live, it represents him *weeping* at our *Funerals*, and like a *tender-hearted* Judge, pronouncing our *Sentence* with the Tears in his Eyes. By which *Metaphorical* Descriptions he represents to us his *infinite* Concern for our Happiness; how much his Heart is set upon it; and how hardly he can bear a Defeat in his *kind* and *merciful* Intentions towards us. For what but an *infinite* Love, could ever have made the King of *Heaven* and *Earth* to stoop so low to his *rebellious* Subjects, as to beseech them to lay down their Weapons of *Hostility* with which they can injure none but themselves; and to listen to his Terms of Mercy, and accept of his Crowns and *everlasting* Preferments? One would have thought, it had been enough for him barely to have told us how he loved us, how willing he was to *Pardon* and *Advance* us; and that this had been enough for ever to recommend him to the *dearest* Affections of his Creatures: But that he should moreover condescend to *supplicate* our Repentance, to beseech us not to spurn his Love, and *frustrate* its Designs of Mercy to us; Lord! How can we think of this, without being all *inflamed* with Love to thee! 'Tis true, he doth not come in Person to us; because we are not able to bear the immediate Approaches of his Glory; but many a Message of Love he hath sent us transcribed from his very Heart. He sent his Son from *Heaven* to us, and clothed him in our Natures, that therein we might be *capable* of conversing freely with him; and all his Errand was to deliver a Message of Love to the World, and to court and importune them to listen to, and comply with it. And when he returned again to his Father, he instituted an *Order of Men* to supply his Room, and in his Stead, to move thee to be happy. For we are *Ambassadors for Christ*, as though God did beseech you by us: We pray you in *Christ's* Stead, be ye reconciled to God, 2 Cor. 5. 20. So that you are set upon the Throne; and not only Men, but God himself lies *prostrate* before your *Footstool*, beseeching you to lay down your Arms, and be reconciled to your *best* Friend, that never did you the least Injury, unless that be one, that he hath loved you better by a *Thousand* Degrees than ever you loved your selves. And can we be such *barbarous* Wretches, as not to listen to him, when he thus *humbles* himself before us, and even comes upon his Knees to us for Reconciliation? How justly may the *whole* Creation be astonished, to see the *great* Majesty of *Heaven* condescend so low, as to beseech and intreat a Company of *rude*, *disdainful* Rebels, whom he could every Moment *frown* into Nothing, to accept of his Love, and at last comply with Terms of Friendship? Who would ever imagine, (but that *sad* Experience evinces the contrary,) that among *reasonable* Beings, there should be found such *Monsters of Ingratitude*, as to persist in Enmity to God, after he hath thus *humbled* himself, and made so many *lowly* Addressee's only to court and woo us to be happy? And thus you see, how many *puissant* Motives to Love are comprehended in these few Words, *because he first loved us*; which are such as nothing can

can ever be able to resist, but a Heart that is *steeled* with *Impudence* and *Ingratitude*. So that if after all these Obligations which God hath laid upon us, if we do not at last surrender up our Hearts unto him, our *Baseness* and *Ingratitude* is such, as nothing but our *eternal* Ruin will be able to expiate. For when with all the Endearments of his *Loving-kindness* he finds, he cannot prevail on us to love him, the very Consideration how *much* he hath obliged us, and what unworthy Requitals we have made him, will but incense him the more against us, till it hath converted his *Kindness* into *implacable Fury*: And when once the *Heats* of wrong'd Love take Fire, and kindle into *Wrath*, it will be a *quenchless Flame*, and *everlasting* Burning. Wherefore, in the Name of God, Sirs, let us endeavour to affect our *Souls* with the Sence of this *dear Love*, to warm our Affections at this *Heavenly Fire*, till it hath insinuated it self into them, and converted them into its own Substance. And that we may be successful herein, let us take with us these following *Directions*:

1. Let us season our *Minds* with *good Opinions* of God: For since 'tis his *Goodness* that is the most immediate Object of our Love to him; whatsoever *Opinions* do reflect upon *that*, or any way tend to cloud and disgrace it, must necessarily damp our Affection towards him. Whilst therefore we look upon God as a mere *arbitrary Being*, as one that conducts all his *Actions* by a *blind Omnipotent Self-will*, and governs the World, and dispenses *Rewards* and *Punishments* to his *Creatures*, according to a certain Fatal Decree, which he hath made without *Fore-sight* or *Consideration*; as one that exacts *Impossibilities* of his *Subjects*; commands the *Lame* to run, the *Blind* to see, and without ever enabling them thereunto, is resolved to *damn* them for ever for *Non-performance*: Whilst, I say, we look upon God through such false *Opticks* as these, they must needs represent him exceeding *unlovely* in our *Eyes*. For though I doubt not, but there are many Men that love God heartily, notwithstanding they have entertained these sour and ghastly *Notions* of him; yet I must seriously profess, had I such *black Opinions* of him, I should never be able heartily to love him, tho' I were sure to be damned for ever for neglecting it. Wherefore, if we would kindle in our *Souls* the Love of God, let us take Care, as much as in us lies, to purge our *Thoughts* of all *ill Opinions* of him, and to represent him fairly to our *Minds*, what he truly is, and what the Scripture represents him to be, *viz.* a most *bountiful* Benefactor unto all his Creation, and an *universal* Lover of the *Souls* of Men; one that heartily *desires* our Welfare, and is *always* ready to contribute to us whatsoever is necessary thereunto. Let us firmly persuade our *selves*, that he *desires* not our Ruin; but would *have all Men to be saved*, and come to the *Knowledge of the Truth*; that when he *finally* destroys any particular Offender, it is in great Mercy to the *Publick*; that he loves not Punishment for *its own* Sake, and never *inflicts* it, but for some *gracious* and *merciful* End. These are such *Thoughts* of God, as are truly *worthy* of him, and infinitely apt to *endear* him to all *considering Minds*.

2. Let us frequently consider and revolve in our *Minds*, the *numerous Reasons* and *Engagements* that we have to love him. For all Vertue whatsoever begins in Consideration; and it being a *rational* Accomplishment, cannot be otherwise acquired, but only by *Reason* and *Discourse*; that is, by considering the *Reasons*, and pressing our *selves* with the *Arguments* upon which it is founded. And thus we must do in the Case before us: If we would attain to a *heartly Love* of God, we must be often entertaining our *Thoughts* with the Consideration of those great *Obligations* he hath laid upon us to love him; how deeply we are engaged by all the *Ties* of *Gratitude* and *Ingenuity*, to repay him in his *own* Coin, and to return him *Love* for *Love*. Nor will it be *sufficient* to affect our *Hearts* with the Sence of those *Obligations*, now and then to reflect a *few slight* and *transient Thoughts* on them; but with *holy David*, we must muse on, till the Fire kindles; we must fix and stay our *Thoughts* upon the Consideration of God's *endearing* Love to us, urge and press them *again* and *again*, till we have wrought and chased them into our *Souls*, and a *heavenly Warmth* diffuses from them, and *enflames* our *Hearts* with a *divine* Affection. Wherefore let us frequently revolve such *Thoughts* as these in our *Minds*: O my
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Soul ! How infinitely art thou obliged to love God, who hath been such a tender Friend and liberal Benefactor to thee, who loved thee before ever thou wast capable of thinking a Thought of Love towards him; yea, and when thou didst most justly deserve to be excommunicated from his Favour for ever; and who hath no other Aim in loving thee, but to do thee good, and make thee happy, and thought nothing too good for thee, that could either promote or complete thy Happiness; but is so importunately concerned for thee, as to beseech and intreat thee not to reject his Favours? And canst thou be cold and insensible in the midst of so many prevailing Endearments? Suppose that thy Fellow-Creature had done for thee but a thousandth Part of what thy God hath done, and thou hadst repaid his Kindness with nothing but Affronts and Indignities; wouldst thou not call thyself a thousand ungrateful Wretches, and acknowledge thyself infinitely unworthy of his Favours? And is it less criminal to be ungrateful to God, than to thy Fellow-Creature? Suppose, thou hadst a Friend that began to love thee as soon as thou wast born, and had persisted to love thee, notwithstanding thou hadst offered him a thousand Provocations to the contrary; that had done thee all the Good he was able, and constantly repaid thy Injuries with Favours: Would not thy Conscience fly in thy Face, and all that is Human in thee, upbraid thy monstrous Baseness? And hath not thy God obliged thee infinitely more than the best Friend in the World? How then canst thou excuse thy Coldness and Indifference to him? Consider, O my Soul, the Eyes of all the Spiritual World are upon thee; Angels and Saints are looking down from their Thrones of Glory, to see how thou wilt acquit thyself under all these mighty Obligations, which if any mortal Friend had laid them upon thee, and thou shouldst have so ill requited him, all the World wou'd have hissed at thee as a Monster of Ingratitude. And is it less infamous, to be an Ungrateful Wretch towards God, than towards a mortal Friend? With what Confidence then, wilt thou lift up thy Head among those Blessed Spirits who have been Spectators of thy Actions, who have seen thy foul Ingratitude towards thy best Friend, and must therefore brand thee for an inglorious Wretch, abandoned of the common Sense and Modesty of Human Nature? And if after you have pressed your Souls with all this mighty Weight of Love, you should be still to learn to re-love the blessed Author of it; I know no other Expedient, but to send you to the Brutes to be their Scholars; to call for your Spaniels, and bid them teach you, and by their kind Returns of your Favours, instruct your cold ungrateful Hearts, to make proportionate Returns of Love to your dearest Lord and Master. Thus, let us frequently argue with our selves, and repeat these Considerations upon our Minds; and certainly, if we have any Sence of Obligations, they cannot fail of warming and affecting our Hearts.

3. Let us endeavour, so much as in us lies, to moderate our Affections to the World. *Love not the World, saith St. John, neither the Things that are in the World. If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him, 1 Epist. 2. 15.* that is, if we inordinately love and dote upon the World; if we suffer its Pleasures, Profits, and Honours, to creep into, to hamper and inveagle our Affections into an excessive Delight and Complacency in them; that will so forestal and prepossess us, that we shall find no Room for the Love of God in our Souls: Our Hearts will be so soaked and moistened with sensual Desires and Complacencies, that the pure Flame of Divine Love will never be able to take hold of, or kindle upon them. For whilst we immoderately dote upon the World, that will so engross our Thoughts, so perpetually importune our Desires, that no Friend from Heaven will ever be able to come at us; no good Thought or Consideration that comes to wooe our Souls for God, will ever find Admittance to them; or, if now and then they obtrude upon us, and force themselves into our Minds, the World will be so busie about us, that we shall not be long at Leisure to attend to them; but whilst they are addressing to us, and importuning our Affections, we shall feel a thousand Rival Thoughts swarming and buzzing about us; and this will be beholding, that pulling, the other claspings it self about us, and wooing us not to leave and forsake them. And though between these Competitors for Love, our Hearts may now and then be a little wavering and irresolute; yet our fond Partiality to the World, will so vehemently incline and bias us, that we shall soon reject those Divine Thoughts, that wou'd so fain court us to a contrary Affection. Wherefore, if ever we wou'd acquire this

this Noble and Heavenly Vertue of Divine Love, we must endeavour, as much as in us lies, to wean and withdraw our selves from the World; to rescue our selves from under its Tyranny and Dominion, into our own Power; that so we may be able to dispose of our Time, our Thoughts and Hearts, as shall seem to us most fit and reasonable. For till we have recovered our Hearts from the World, into our own Disposal, how can we resign them to God? Before we can give him our selves, we must be in our own Power; which no Man can be, so long as he is *intbrall'd* to the World.

Wherefore, if we would become *heartly* Lovers of God, we must labour so much as in us lies, to get such a *Sovereignty* over our *Earthly* Desires and Affections, as that whensoever we are minded to retire from the World, and converse with God, we may be able to keep them off at such a Distance, as that they may not be able to intrude upon us, to mingle themselves with our Contemplations, and divert our Eyes from the endearing Prospect of his *infinite Love* and *Loveliness*. And then our Thoughts will stay and dwell upon *this ravishing* Theme, like *Bees* upon a *sweet Flower*; and never rise, till they have extracted thence the *Honey* of *Canaan*, the *delicious Sweets* of *Heavenly Love* and *Complacency*; then we shall muse on till the Fire burns; and never take off our Eyes from God, till we have *gazed* our selves into Captivity to his Love and Beauty.

4. If we would attain to the Love of God, we must endeavour, by the *constant* Practice of what is agreeable to his Nature, to reconcile our Minds and Tempers to it. For whilst our Minds are averse to the Perfections of his Nature, to the *Justice*, *Purity*, and *Goodness* of it, the most *powerful* Motives of his Love and Benevolence will never be able to beget in us an *heartly* Complacency in him. We may admire his Love to us, and be sometimes moved by the Consideration of it, into *mighty* Transports of *sensitive* Passion; but 'tis impossible, we should ever attain to a *fix'd* and *permanent* Delight in him, till we are reconciled to his Nature. For all *true* and *constant* Love is founded in a Likeness of Natures: And therefore, till we are in some Measure *god-like*; till we are *pure* as he is *pure*, *just* as he is *just*, *good* and *merciful* as he is *good* and *merciful*, we have not as yet so much as laid the Foundation of *Divine Love*; nay, we are so far from *that*, that we are under a *prevalent* Repugnancy and Antipathy to the *Divine* Nature. Wherefore, if ever we would be sincere and hearty Lovers of God, we must resolve to betake our selves to the *constant* Practice of all those *eternal Laws* of *Goodness*, that are founded in his *blessed* Nature; which if we do, and persist in our Resolution, we shall find the Practice of them will by degrees render them first *tolerable*, then *easy*, then *delightful*, then *natural* to us. And when once the Laws of *God's* Nature are thus *transcribed* and *copied* into ours; when our Hearts and *his*, stand bent the *same* Way, and are for the *main*, alike *inclined* and *disposed*; then we are prepared for *Divine Love*, made *proper* and *convenient* Fuel to receive that *Heavenly* Flame. For, as when God sees himself in us, his *Goodness*, *Purity*, and *Holiness* stamp and impressed upon our Natures, he is inclined by his own *Self-love* to be pleased with, and take Complacency in us; so when we come to see our selves in God, to see all that in him for which we value our selves, and to see it all in the *utmost* Perfection in him, which is yet so *imperfect* in our selves; our own *Self-love* will *endear* him to us, and *wing* our Souls with an *active* vigorous Love to him. Wherefore, if we would love God, let us live in the Practice of all *god like* Vertues, till by accustoming our selves thereunto, we have conquered our own Repugnancies and Antipathies to his *blessed* Nature; and then our Hearts will stand open to his Love, and we shall feel it enter into us, and insinuate it self into our Wills and Affections, like a *sprightful* and *active* Flame, till it hath all inflamed them with Love, and converted them into its own Substance.

5. And Lastly, If we would acquire this Heavenly Vertue, to all the foregoing Directions, we must add *constant* and *earnest* Prayer to God. For when we have done all, it is most certain, that without the Assistance of *this* Grace, we cannot love him; but if we do all, and then implore and supplicate his Assistance, we

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Wherefore, if we would become *heartly* Lovers of God, we must labour so much as in us lies, to get such a *Sovereignty* over our *Earthly* Desires and Affections, as that whensoever we are minded to retire from the World, and converse with God, we may be able to keep them off at such a Distance, as that they may not be able to intrude upon us, to mingle themselves with our Contemplations, and divert our Eyes from the endearing Prospect of his *infinite Love* and *Loveliness*. And then our Thoughts will stay and dwell upon *this ravishing* Theme, like *Bees* upon a *sweet Flower*; and never rise, till they have extracted thence the *Honey* of *Canaan*, the *delicious Sweets* of *Heavenly Love* and *Complacency*; then we shall muse on till the Fire burns; and never take off our Eyes from God, till we have *gazed* our selves into Captivity to his Love and Beauty.

4. If we would attain to the Love of God, we must endeavour, by the *constant* Practice of what is agreeable to his Nature, to reconcile our Minds and Tempers to it. For whilst our Minds are averse to the Perfections of his Nature, to the *Justice*, *Purity*, and *Goodness* of it, the most *powerful* Motives of his Love and Benevolence will never be able to beget in us an *heartly* Complacency in him. We may admire his Love to us, and be sometimes moved by the Consideration of it, into *mighty* Transports of *sensitive* Passion; but 'tis impossible, we should ever attain to a *fix'd* and *permanent* Delight in him, till we are reconciled to his Nature. For all *true* and *constant* Love is founded in a Likeness of Natures: And therefore, till we are in some Measure *god-like*; till we are *pure* as he is *pure*, *just* as he is *just*, *good* and *merciful* as he is *good* and *merciful*, we have not as yet so much as laid the Foundation of *Divine Love*; nay, we are so far from *that*, that we are under a *prevalent* Repugnancy and Antipathy to the *Divine* Nature. Wherefore, if ever we would be sincere and hearty Lovers of God, we must resolve to betake our selves to the *constant* Practice of all those *eternal Laws* of *Goodness*, that are founded in his *blessed* Nature; which if we do, and persist in our Resolution, we shall find the Practice of them will by degrees render them first *tolerable*, then *easy*, then *delightful*, then *natural* to us. And when once the *Laws* of *God's* Nature are thus *transcribed* and *copied* into ours; when our Hearts and his, stand bent the *same* Way, and are for the *main*, alike *inclined* and *disposed*; then we are prepared for *Divine Love*, made *proper* and *convenient* Fuel to receive that *Heavenly* Flame. For, as when God sees himself in us, his *Goodness*, *Purity*, and *Loveliness* stamp and impressed upon our Natures, he is inclined by his own *Self-love* to be pleased with, and take Complacency in us; so when we come to see our selves in God, to see all that in him for which we value our selves, and to see it all in the *utmost* Perfection in him, which is yet so *imperfect* in our selves; our own *Self-love* will *endear* him to us, and *wing* our Souls with an *active* *vigorous* Love to him. Wherefore, if we would love God, let us live in the Practice of all *god like* Vertues, till by *accustoming* our selves thereunto, we have conquered our own Repugnancies and Antipathies to his *blessed* Nature; and then our Hearts will stand *open* to his Love, and we shall feel it enter into us, and insinuate it self into our Wills and Affections, like a *sprightful* and *active* Flame, till it hath all inflamed them with Love, and converted them into its own Substance.

5. And Lastly, If we would acquire this Heavenly Vertue, to all the foregoing Directions, we must add *constant* and *earnest* Prayer to God. For when we have done all, it is most certain, that without the Assistance of *this* Grace, we cannot love him; but if we do all, and then implore and supplicate his Assistance, we

have as much Assurance of it, as the Promise of Truth it self can give us. If therefore we have a hearty Mind to love him we shall both do *our own* Parts towards it, and earnestly implore him to do *his*. For so when we petition for our *daily Bread*, we do not say our Prayers, and then sit down with our Hands in our Bosoms, expecting that *Bread* should drop from Heaven into our Mouths; but we presently betake our selves to some *honest* Imployment, and therein diligently endeavour to obtain what we pray for. And the same Course we shall take, if we desire to love God with the same Sincerity as we desire Food: We shall *pray* and *endeavour*, and *endeavour* and *pray*; we shou'd be diligent in doing what is in our Power, and be importunate with God to do what is only in his. And certainly, did we but know the Worth of this Heavenly Vertue, this *Soul* and *Queen* of all other Graces; we should count no *Prayers*, no *Tears*, no *Endeavours* too much to purchase and obtain it. Did we but consider, how useful and delightful it is, how at once it entices and enlivens Men, what a powerful *Bias* it claps upon their *Hearts* to incline them to their Duty; and with what Joy and Chearfulness it carries them through the greatest *Difficulties*, and turns their *Toils* into *Recreations*; how it *clears* and *smooths* their Countenance, *revives* and *elevates* their *Hearts*: Did Men, I say, but consider this, they wou'd give neither themselves nor Heaven Rest, till they felt their cold and sluggish Souls inspir'd and animated with it. Wherefore, to *all* our Endeavours after it, let us joyn our earnest Prayers to God, that he wou'd kindle our stupid Hearts, and touch our cold Affections with an out-stretched Ray from himself; that he wou'd conquer our Repugnance to him, and represent his Love and Beauty to our Souls, in such affecting and attractive Forms, as may not fail to captivate our Hearts, and subdue our obstinate Wills, that have so long held out against *all* the Storms and Batteries of his endearing Goodness. And if we *thus* pray, and *thus* endeavour, and persevere in *both*, we shall at length most certainly *feel* this Heavenly Grace springing up within us, and growing on to Maturity by insensible Degrees, till at last it hath gotten an entire Possession of our Souls, and subdued *all* our Powers and Affections to its sweet and blessed Empire: And then we shall *feel* our selves acted in Religion by a new Soul, and carried on through *all* its weary Stages with an unspeakable Life and Vigour: Then *all* our Duty will be naturalized to us; and we shall do God's *Will* upon Earth, with almost the same Chearfulness and Alacrity, as it is done by our blessed Brethren in Heaven. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, To whom be Honour, &c.

DIS-

DISCOURSE [XXII.]

UPON

P S A L. xi. 7.

For the righteous Lord loveth Righteousness.

BY *Righteousness* here, some *Expositors* understand the *Righteousness* of *Punishment*; because in the foregoing Verse it is said, upon the Wicked he shall rain Snares, Fire and Brimstone, &c. and then it follows why he shall do it; *For the righteous Lord loveth Righteousness*: But considering the whole, I rather believe, that by *Righteousness* here, is meant *Righteousness* of *Life and Manners*: For it seems more probable, that the Text is a Reason of the two former Verses, than of that immediately foregoing: But the whole that is asserted, is this; *The Lord trieth the Righteous; but the Wicked and him that loveth Violence, his Soul hateth. Upon the Wicked he shall rain Snares, &c.* As if he should have said, there is a vast Difference between God's dealing with the *Righteous* and the *Wicked*: For though sometimes he afflicts the *Righteous*; yet 'tis only to prove and try them, and to render their *Vertue* more *exemplary* and *illustrious*: But as for the *Wicked*, when he rains down *Punishments* on them, it is out of a just Hatred and Indignation against them. And the Reason why he is thus differently affected towards these different Persons, is, because of the different Affection he bears towards their *contrary Qualifications*: He loves the *Righteousness* of the *Righteous*, and that makes him chasten them in Love, and for kind and merciful Ends and Purposes; but he hates the *Wickedness* of the *Wicked*, and that makes him proceed against them with so much Wrath and Severity. So that by *Righteousness* here, he means, that Goodness and Vertue which is *inherent* in *righteous* Persons, is evident from what follows; *the righteous Lord loveth Righteousness, his Countenance doth behold the Upright*; that is, he looks upon them with a most gracious and benevolent Aspect: Which latter Words, being only a fuller Exemplification of the former, plainly shew, that by the *Righteousness* mentioned in them, is meant the *Righteousness* of *righteous* Persons; and consequently, that it doth not signify the *Righteousness* of *Punishment*, but the *Righteousness* of *Manners*: By which we are not to understand that single Vertue of *Honesty* or *Justice*; but all the Vertues, or Vertue in the general, in its utmost Compass and Latitude. For so in the sacred Dialect it is very usual to express the whole Duty of Man by *Righteousness*. So *Prov. 14. 34. Righteousness exalteth a Nation, but Sin is a Reproach to any People*; where the Opposition plainly implies, that by *Righteousness* we are to understand all that is *contrary* to Sin, that is, all that is contained within the Compass of our Duty. So also *Heb. 1. 9. Thou hast loved Righteousness, and hated Iniquity*; where *Righteousness* being opposed to *ἀνομία*, or Transgression of the Law in general, must, according to the Rule of Opposition, be understood in the same Latitude, to signify all Obedience to the Law in general.

And indeed, all our Duty being a *natural* and *eternal* Due, either to God, our Neighbour, or our selves, the whole may very well be expressed by *Righteousness*; the Performance of every one of them being an Act of strict Justice, the Payment of a due Debt, either to our selves or others. The Meaning therefore of the Words,

is this ; God, who himself is infinitely *pure*, and *holy*, and *good*, is a *constant*, *heart*-*ty* Lover of *Purity* and *Goodness* in others, wheresoever he sees, or finds it. In the Management of which Argument, I shall do these two Things ;

1. Shew you, upon what Principles and Reasons God is a Lover of *Vertue* and *Goodness*.
2. What *Indications* he hath given to the World that he is so.

1. I shall shew upon what Principles and Reasons God is a Lover of *Vertue* and *Goodness* ; and they are principally these Four :

1. He loves *Righteousness*, or *Goodness*, as it is an *essential* Perfection of *his own* Nature.
2. He loves it, as it is the *main* Principle and Foundation of *his own* Happiness.
3. He loves it, as it is that which exalts all *other* Creatures into *his own* *Likeness* and *Resemblance*.
4. He loves it, as it is the Spring or Cause from whence the *highest* Happiness of his most *beloved* Creatures is derived.

1. God loves *Righteousness*, or *Goodness*, as it is an *essential* Perfection of *his own* Nature. For supposing God to be a *reasonable* Being, as all acknowledge him to be, who acknowledge him at all, he must be in all Respects most perfectly *reasonable* ; otherwise he would be deficient of that *natural* Perfection which the very Notion and *Idea* of God implies ; and if he be perfectly *reasonable*, he must be supposed to govern *himself*, his *Choices*, *Motions*, and *Actions*, by the *truest*, *best*, and *purest* Reason : And herein consists the perfect *Holiness* and *Righteousness* which the *Essence* and Notion of God implies, in a perfect Conformity of all his *Choices* and *Actions* to the *eternal* and *infallible* Reason of *his own* Mind ; in *choosing* to do every thing which *right* Reason requires, and *refusing* to do any thing which it forbids. And this is so *essential* to God, that to exclude it out of the Notion of him, is in Effect, to deny his Being ; or which is worse, to *fancie* him an *Almighty blind Polyphemus*, that hath an Arm of *infinite* Force, but no Eye in his Head, to guide or direct it. When therefore we submit all our *Choices* and *Actions* to the Conduct and Government of *right* Reason, we steer our Course by God's *Compass*, and live and move by the self-same Rule whereby he governs himself, and all his *Motions*. And when we do what God would have us, we are sure to do what *right* Reason requires ; because we are sure, he would have us do nothing but what is *agreeable* with the *infallible* Reason of *his own* Mind. When therefore we submit our Wills to God's, our Wills and his are governed by the *self-same* Reason, even by the most *perfect* Reason of his *All-comprehending* Mind, which never can deceive, or be deceived. And when our *Wills*, *Affections*, and *Inclinations*, are once reduc'd under the Government of God's Reason, we are of the *same* Temper with God, because we are formed and tempered by the same Reason ; we are affected and inclined as he is, and are made Partakers of his *Divine* Nature, and are *pure* as he is *pure*, and *holy* as he is *holy*, and do communicate with him in *Righteousness* and *Goodness*, which is the *essential* Glory and Perfection of *his own* Nature. So that *Holiness* and *Righteousness* in us being only a *Ray* and *Representation* of God, it is no more Wonder that he loves it, than that he loves himself ; it being nothing but himself derived, *his own* Perfection copied out and transcribed into our Temper and Natures. Were the Sun a living Being, we cannot imagine, but as he would be infinitely pleased with his own *inherent* Brightness ; so he would be greatly delighted to behold that vast Sphere of Light which he diffuses round about him ; to see his own *out stretch'd* Rays shining through this *Spacious* World, and glorifying with their *quick* Reflections all those *dark* and *opaque* Bodies that are continually moving round about him. How then can we imagine, that the living God, who is infinitely *glorious* in *Holiness* himself, and loves himself infinitely for being so, can without vast Delight and Satisfaction, behold *his own* Beauty, Light,

Light, and Purity, shining on the Face of his Creatures; that he should not be enamoured with the Reflections of that which is the Brightness of his own Being; and take infinite Complacency, when he looks down from his Throne, and beholds his Creatures gilded with his Rays, and glorified with *his own* Glory? For if God love himself, he must love what is suitable to himself; and consequently, since himself is *Righteous*, he must love Righteousness, or quarrel with the Perfection of his own Nature. And this Reason of his Love of Righteousness is implied in the very Words, *The righteous Lord loveth Righteousness.*

2. He loves *Righteousness* and *true Goodness*, as it is the main Principle and Foundation of *his own* Happiness. For if he were not *just*, and *holy*, and *good*, he would be a miserable Being, notwithstanding all his Power and Knowledge: For though by these he might defend himself from all *foreign* Hurt or Injury; yet could he not secure *his own* Content by them, or enjoy himself with any Peace or Pleasure. For perfect *Holiness*, as I have shewed you, consists in an exact Conformity of Actions to the eternal Rules of Reason; but God having a *full* and *perfect* Comprehension of the eternal Reasons of Things, could never be satisfied with himself, if he should act Unreasonably; because his Reason would condemn his Practice, and *his own* Knowledge would *libel* and *upbraid* him. For whenever he reflected on himself, his own *All-seeing* Eye would detect him; and by unmasking the Deformity of his *Actions*, would render him an *inglorious* Spectacle to himself. How then could he enjoy himself, whilst in the Glass of his own Omniscience, he beheld himself so odiously Represented? What Content could he take in his own *Choices* and *Actions*, whilst his own *infallible* Reason disapproved them, and their Unreasonableness exposed them to the *just* Reproaches of *his own* Mind? No, certainly; should he any ways swerve in his own *Choices*, *Affections*, or *Actions*, from the eternal Reason of *his own* Mind, he would be so far from being pleased with himself, that he would be his own eternal Torment; and that *infinite* Reason which he himself cannot deceive or impose on, would so Expose and Shame him, that whensoever he review'd himself, he would be sure to appear a most *ghastly* Spectacle in *his own* Eyes. That therefore which renders him so infinitely happy in himself, is not so much the Power he hath to defend himself from *foreign Hurts* and *Injuries*, as the exact Agreement of all his *Motions* and *Actions* with the *all-comprehending* Reason of *his own* Mind.

He always sees what is *best*; and what he so sees, he always *chuses* and *affects*; and this makes him perfectly satisfied with himself, and fills him with *infinite* Joy and Complacency. When ever he surveys himself in the *glorious* Mirror of *his own* Mind, he discerns nothing in himself but what is infinitely lovely and amiable, nothing but what exactly corresponds with the *fairest* Idea of his own *infinite* Reason; every thing in him is as it should be, every Motion and every Action so perfectly *good* and exactly *reasonable*, that his own *all-seeing* Eye can discern no possible Degree of Perfection wanting in them; and this makes him *infinitely* pleased with himself, *infinitely* joyed and contented in the Prospect of *his own* Beauty and Glory. So that God's *Holiness* and *Righteousness*; or, which is the same Thing, the exact Agreement of *Choices* and *Actions* with the *infallible* Reason of *his own* Mind, being the principal and eternal Spring of his Happiness, it is no Wonder, if he loves it wheresoever he finds it: For how should he forbear being *pleased* and *delighted* with it, when he hath such a continued Experiment of the *blessed* Effects of it in his own Bosom; when he feels himself made *happy* by it, and hath every Moment a *fresh* Relish of the Joys and Pleasures which result from it? Can he be so insensible of *his own* Happiness, as not to be enamoured with the *blessed* Cause of it? Or can the Tree be *indifferent* to him, when the Fruit is so infinitely *grateful*? No certainly, it is impossible, but that the eternal Sense he hath in himself of the Joy, the Pleasure, the Bliss, of being *holy*, should infinitely *endear* Holiness to him, and engage his Soul in an everlasting Love of it.

3. God loves *Righteousness*, as it is an *Improvement* and *Exaltation* of his Creatures into his *own* Likeness and Resemblance. Every Being that loves it self, naturally affects, so far as it is able, to *derive* it self, to beget its own Image, and propagate its own Likeness and Resemblance; which is an *immediate* Consequence of that Principle of Self-love that is in us, which inclines us to *increase* and *multiply* our selves, and diffuse and spread *our own* Tempers and Natures. And no Wonder then, that God, who is the best of Beings, and whose Love to himself is as *infinite*, as *his own* Beauties and Perfections, should affect to *derive* and communicate himself, to *beget* and *propagate* his own most *amiable* Image in his Creatures. The *infinite* Love which he bears, cannot but approve *his own* Likeness; and what he *likes*, he must needs be inclined to produce where it is not, and to love where it is. But now *Righteousness* being that *moral* Attribute which comprises all those Perfections of his Nature, wherein the Beauty and Glory of it consists, is the only Accomplishment that can render a Creature *like* him, in that which renders him so infinitely *lovely* in *his own* Eyes. As for *Omnipotence*, *Omniscience*, *Eternity*, and *Omnipresence*, they are *amiable*, only as they are crowned with *infinite Righteousness* and *Goodness*; and abstracted from these, they have nothing of Form or Comeliness in them. That therefore which moulds us into a Resemblance of God, and renders us like him in that which is the Beauty of his *other* Attributes, is *Righteousness*: And therefore this he must love, if he love himself; because 'tis *his own* Image: As for *Power*, and *Knowledge*, and *Length of Duration*, though we should partake of them with him to the *highest* Degree that is possible for Creatures; yet we may be infinitely *unlike* him: For so the *Devils* are, who yet are liberally endowed with these *natural* Perfections of the *Divinity*; but the more they employ their *Power* and *Knowledge* to *unrighteous* Purposes, the more, *ungod-like* they are for being *Powerful* and *Knowing*; and then only are *Knowledge* and *Power* *god-like* Perfections, when *Righteousness* and *Goodness* is their Scope and Rule: For without these, they are only the Perfections of *Devils*; but *good* and *righteous Devils*, are Contradictions in Terms. Since therefore 'tis *Righteousness* only, that can stamp us *god-like* Creatures, God must needs love it out of that *natural* Inclination which he and all other Beings, have, to propagate his own Likeness. For without *Righteousness*, no Creatures can resemble him; and therefore if he love to be resembled, as he must needs do, because he loves himself, he must love *that* which gives the Resemblance; and *this*, and *this* only, is *Righteousness* and *true Goodness*.

4. And Lastly, God loves *Righteousness*, as it is the Spring, or Cause from whence the *highest* Happiness of his Creatures is derived. For he loves Beings *more or less*, according to their *intrinsic* Worth and Value; and doubtless, of all Orders of Beings, there are none so *valuable* as the *Rational*: And therefore, if he love these most, he cannot but be desirous of their Happiness; and if he be, he cannot but love that which is the Spring and Cause of it; and this is *universal Righteousness*. For the Foundation of our Happiness must necessarily be laid in the Perfection of our Natures; and our Natures being *Rational*, the Perfection of them must consist in a *perfect* Compliance of all their Powers and Faculties with all the *eternal* Rules of Reason, which is all one with *universal Righteousness*. For doubtless, the *highest* Perfection of *reasonable* Faculties is to act most reasonably, when they govern themselves by the *unchangeable* Laws of *Righteousness*. *Righteousness* therefore being our Perfection, as we are *reasonable* Beings, must necessarily be the Spring and Principle of our Happiness; and 'tis as impossible for us to be *happy* without it, as 'tis to be *well* in Sicknes, or at Ease under Pain. For to the Happiness of every Nature that is *capable* of being happy, *two* Things are requisite: *First*, That there be no Disorder within it self; that its *Parts* and *Faculties* be not disordered, nor their *Vigour* and *Activity* lessened and abated: *Secondly*, That all its *Faculties* be employed and exercised about such Objects as are most *grateful* and *suitable* to their Natures: Upon both which Accounts, *Righteousness* is most *necessary* to the Happiness of every *reasonable* Nature. For in the *first* Place, 'tis *Righteousness* that rectifies all their Disorders, and reduces them to their *native*

and

and most *genuine* Temper. No reasonable Nature is *well*, and in Health, so long as it acts unreasonably and unrighteously; its Pulse beats disorderly, while it beats either *faster* or *slower* than *right* Reason prescribes; while it acts either on this side, or beyond the *Medium*, in the *Defect*, or *Excess* of Vertue; and whilst 'tis thus *sick* and *distempered*, 'tis impossible it should be *happy*. But now, by acting righteously, it revives and grows *well* again; it throws off those *unreasonable*, and consequently *unnatural* Inclinations, that clogg'd and obstructed all its *regular* Motions, and by Degrees recovers to the *native* Temper and Complexion of a *Rational* Nature; and when once it hath perfectly discharged it self of all those *unreasonable* and *unrighteous* Humours that disorder'd it, it will then live in *perfect* Health and Ease, and all its *linguishing* Faculties be restor'd to their *natural* Vigour and Activity. And then *secondly*, as Righteousness recovers *us* from all the Distempers of Nature; so it employs and exercises our Faculties about such Objects as are most *grateful* and *suitable* to them. For *Truth* and *true Goodness* are the *only* Objects that can gratifie a reasonable Nature acting reasonably; and about these doth Righteousness naturally dispose our Faculties to employ and exercise themselves; it disposes our *Understanding* to *contemplate* upon, and our *Wills* to *embrace* and *chuse* that God who is the Fountain of *Truth* and *Goodness*: For every Thing loves its *own Like*; and what it loves, it is inclined to think on. So that when we are *righteous*, as God is, we shall naturally love him, because he is *like us*; and then our Love to him will still incline our Thoughts to the Contemplation of his Beauty and Glories; and so the more *righteous* we grow, the more we shall love him; and the more we love him, the more our Understandings will be inclined to meditate upon him, and so *more and more*, till we arrive at that *City of Vision* where we shall see him Face to Face, and be eternally *ravished* with the Love and Contemplation of him. Thus Righteousness, you see, is the Spring and Cause of our Happiness; and being so, he must needs love it, who above all things, desires and solicits our Welfare: For he being perfectly *happy* from himself, cannot need our Misery to augment his Happiness; and therefore cannot desire it: But on the contrary, he must desire our Happiness, out of that *infinite* Complacency and Delight which he takes in *his own*; it being impossible, that he, whose Delight and Love is always founded on the same Motives, should delight in contrary Objects, in different Subjects, in *Happiness* in himself, and in *Misery* in his Creatures: And if he desire our *Happiness*, as most certainly he doth, how can he forbear to love and take Complacency in that which contributes so much to it? Thus you see, upon what Reasons and Principles it is, that God is so firm a Lover of Righteousness.

2. I now proceed in the Second Place to shew you, what Indications he hath given the World of his *steady* Affection and Good-will to *Righteousness*. Now these, though they are many, and almost *infinite*, may be reduced to Two *general* Heads. *1st*. The *natural* Indications, *2^{dly}*. The *supernatural* ones: Of both which I shall endeavour to give you some brief Account.

1. God hath given *us* Sundry *natural* Indications of his Love of Righteousness: All which I shall reduce to these Four Heads:

1. He hath imprinted a Law upon our Natures, which approves of *righteous* Actions, and condemns their Contraries.

He hath endued our Minds with a *grateful* Sense of *righteous* Actions, and a *natural* Horror of their Contraries.

3. He hath *coupled* good Effects to all *righteous* Actions, and bad ones to their Contraries.

4. He hath *implanted* in *us* natural Abodings of the *future* Reward of *righteous* Actions, and the *future* Punishment of their Contraries.

1. One Indication of God's Love of *Righteousness*, is his imprinting a Law upon our *Natures*, which approves all *righteous* Actions, and disapproves their *Contraries*: And this Law is that *natural* Reason, which is either connate with our Understanding,

derstanding. or doth *immediately* result from the *righteous* Use and Exercise of it. For such is the Frame of our *Understandings*, that whensoever we impartially reason about Things, we are forced to distinguish between *Good* and *Evil*; and without offering infinite Violence to our Faculties, we can never persuade our selves, that to *blaspheme* God, or to *reverence* him, to *lie* or *speak* Truth, to *honour* our Parents, or to *scorn*, or despitefully *use* them, are indifferent Things: For as soon as we open the Eye of our Reason, we immediately discern such an *essential* Difference between them, as forces us to condemn the One, and approve the Other: And hence we see, that as for the great Strokes of *Unrighteousness*, they have as much the *universal* Judgment of our Reason against them, as any false Conclusion in the *Mathematicks*: Whereas the *Goodness* of their contrary *Vertues* is as universally Acknowledged by us, as the Truth of any *first* Principle in *Philosophy*. God therefore having created us with such a *contrary* Judgment upon *righteous* and *unrighteous* Actions, we must either say, that he hath made us judge falsely, or else acknowledge this Judgment to be *his*, as well as the Faculty that made it; and if it be, then tis a *sufficient* Indication of his Love of Righteousness, that he hath so framed our Faculties, that without *apparent* Violence, they cannot but approve of it. For whatsoever our Faculties do naturally speak, they are made to speak from the Author of Nature: They only speak what he hath dictated to them; and so what *they* say, *he* says, who hath put his *Word* into their Mouths, and hath made them speak it. Our Faculties therefore being God's *Oracles*, whatsoever they freely and naturally pronounce, is as much his *Word*, as any *outward* Revelation. Since therefore they so unanimously pronounce their Approbation of Righteousness, it is as plain a Signification of God's Love and Approbation of it, as if he himself should immediately pronounce it by a Voice from *Heaven*.

2. Another Indication of God's Love of Righteousness, is his enduing our Minds with a *grateful* Sence of *righteous* Actions, and a *natural* Horror of their *Contraries*. We find, that antecedently to all our *Reasoning* and *Discourse*, there is something in our Natures to which Vertue is a grateful Thing, and its *Contraries* very *nauseous* and *loathsome*: For thus, before we are *capable* of Reasoning our selves into any *Pleasure* or *Displeasure*, our Nature is rejoiced at a *kind* or a *just* Action, either in *our selves* or *others*, before we can speak, or are *capable* of being *allured*, by Hope, or *awed* by Correction. We are sensibly pleased, when we see, we have pleased those that have obliged us; as sensibly grieved, when we are *conscious* of having grieved and offended them. We love to see those fare *well*, whom we have seen deserve *well*; and when any *unjust* Violence is offered them, our Nature shrinks at, and abhors it. We pity and compassionate the *Miserable*, when we know not why; and are ready to offer at their Relief, when we can give no Reason for it: Which is a plain Evidence, that these Things proceed not merely either from our Education, or *deliberate* Choices; but from some natural Instinct *antecedent* to both, and that in the very Frame of our Nature there is implanted by the Author of it, a *Sympathy* with Vertue, and an *Antipathy* to Vice. And hence it is, that in the Beginnings of Sin, our Nature is so shy of an evil Action, and doth so *startle* and *boggle* at it; that it approaches it with such a *modest* Coyness; and goes blushing to it, like a Virgin to an *Adulterer's* Bed; that it passes into Sin with such *Regret* and *Reluctancy*, and looks back upon it with such *Shame* and *Confusion*; which in our tender Years, when we are not as yet arrived to the Exercise of our Understandings, can be supposed to proceed from Reason or Conscience; but from some secret Instinct of Nature, which by these, and such like Indications, declares it self violated and offended. And this plainly shews the mighty Respect that God hath to Righteousness; that he hath woven into our Beings such a grateful Sence of it, and such a Horror of its *Contraries*. For this *natural* Sence, was doubtless, intended by God to be the first Guide of *Human* Nature, that so when as yet 'tis not *capable* of following Reason and Conscience, it might be led on to Righteousness by its own *necessary* Instincts; that these might dispose us to our Duty, and keep us out of those *wicked* Prejudices, till we come under the Conduct of our Reason, that so this

this may then lead us forward with more Ease and Felicity in the Paths of Righteousness. What a plain Indication therefore, is this of God's Love of *Righteousness*, that he hath taken so much Care to incline our Natures to it, that he hath not only given us *reasonable* Faculties that do naturally direct us to *Righteousness*, but hath also taken so much Care to lead us to it by Instinct, till we are grown up to the Exercise of those Faculties, and are *capable* of being guided by them?

3. Another Indication of God's Love of Righteousness, is his coupling *good* Effects to *righteous* Actions, and *bad* ones to their Contraries. For if we consult the Consequents of *Human* Actions, we shall generally find, that all *moral Good* resolves into *natural*, in the *Health* and *Pleasure*, the *Credit* and *Tranquillity* of those that practise it. For so the first *Great Mover* in that Course and Series of Things which he hath established in the World, hath ordered and disposed it; that every Action which is *morally good*, should ordinarily tend to, and determine in some *natural* Benefit and Advantage; that the *good* Government of every Passion, should tend to the Tranquillity of our Minds, and the *due* Regulation of every Appetite center in the *Health* and *Pleasure* of our Bodies; that *Abstinence* and *Humility*, *Honesty* and *Charity*, should have *happy* Effects chained to them; that they should contribute to our *Good* both *private* and *publick*; and, that their contrary Vices, should be always pregnant with some *mischievous* Inconvenience; that they should either unite the *Organs* of our Reason, or *impair* the Vigour and Activity of our Tempers, or *imbroil* the Peace and Tranquillity of our Minds, or *invade* the *Common weal* of Societies, which includes the Interest of each *particular* Member. Such *contrary* Effects as these, are as necessary to *vertuous* and *vicious* Actions, in that Course of Things which God hath established, as *Light* is to the *Sun*, or *Heat* to the *Fire*; by which he hath plainly *demonstrated*, how contrarily he is affected to those *contrary* Cases. For by those *natural Goods* and *Evils*, which are appendent to *Human* Actions, he hath plainly *distinguished* them into *moral Goods* and *Evils*; and those *good* and *bad* Effects which he hath annexed to them, are most *sensible* Marks of his Love of the *one*, and his Hatred of the *other*. For, to be sure, he would never have made Righteousness the Cause of so much *Good* to us, if he had not loved it; nor Wickedness the Spring of so many *Mischiefs* and *Inconveniencies*, if he had not hated and abhorred it. The Effects of Righteousness, are ordinarily a *Reward*, and the Consequents of Sin, a *Punishment* to it self; and this by God's *own* Order and Disposal: And pray, by what Significations can a *Law-giver*, more effectually declare his Love and Hatred of Actions, than by rewarding and punishing them?

4. And Lastly, Another Indication of God's Love of Righteousness, is the *natural* *Prefages* and *Abodings* which he hath implanted in our Natures of the *future* Reward of *righteous* Actions, and the *future* Punishment of their Contraries. That there are such *Abodings* as these in *Human* Nature, is apparent by this, that antecedently, to all *Divine* Revelation, Men of all *Ages*, *Nations* and *Religions*, have felt and experienc'd them; yea, and that it hath been experienc'd not only among the *politer* and more *learned* Nations, who may be supposed to be persuaded of a *future* State, by the probable *Arguments* of *Philosophy*; but also among the most *barbarous* and *uncultivated*, who cannot be supposed to have believed it upon Principles of Reason. For though some of them have been so *rude*, as to disband Society, and live like *Beasts*, without Laws and Government; yet have they not been able to extinguish their *natural* Hopes and Fears of *future* Rewards and Punishments; which is an *unanswerable* Evidence how deeply the Sense of *another* World is imprinted upon *Human* Nature. And as we have such a *natural* Sense of a *future* State, as we cannot easily stifle; so our *Minds* do naturally bode, that we shall fare *well* or *ill* in it, according as we behave *our selves* righteously or unrighteously in *this* Life. When we do well, and reflect upon it, it leaves a *delicious* Farewel on our *Minds*; our Conscience *smiles*, and promises *glorious Things* that we shall reap from it, most *happy* and *blessed Fruits* in the other World. And as the Sense of doing well doth naturally suggest to us the most *ravishing* Hopes and *blissful Expectations*; so the Sense of doing ill, fills our *Minds* with *sad* and *dire* Prefages;

our Conscience bodes us a *black and woful Eternity*, wherein we shall dearly pay for our *sinful Delights and Gratifications*. And though for the *present* we can divert and stifle this troublesome Sense of our *Natures*; yet *Naturam expellas* -- is true in this also; though we thrust off Nature with a Fork, yet 'twill return again upon us; and a Fit of *Sickness*, or a sudden Calamity, or a *serious Thought*, will soon awake and receive in it those *black Prognosticks* of our future Torment. And hence we generally find, that *bad Men* are most afraid of *Eternity*, when they are *nearest* to it; their Fear, like other *Natural Motions*, being swiftest when 'tis nearest its Center. For so *Plato* hath observed; *ἡ εὐδαιμονία ἐγγύς*, When Men are near Death, or suppose themselves near it, there arises in them great Fear and Thoughtfulness of a future State, which before they never thought of. And that this springs not from Superstition, but from Nature, is evident by this, that *Atheists themselves* who are most remote from Superstition, when they come to die, are rarely able to suppress this *ominous Dread and Fear* of another World; but in despite of themselves, are forc'd into those *dismal Expectations*, which before they laugh'd at: A clear Demonstration, that these *ill Bodings* spring from something within them, that they cannot conquer; and that what their *Minds* now speak, is not so much the Sence of their Opinion, as their Nature. And this Language of Nature is a clear Expression of God's Love of Righteousness: For the Voice of Nature is only the Voice of the God of Nature eccho'd and rebounded: And, to be sure, whatever he imprints upon our Natures, is the Sence and Meaning of *his own Heart*, since his Veracity will not permit him to print any Falshood there. And since by these our *natural Bodings*, the God of Nature proposes to us a Future Reward if we are *righteous*, and Future Punishment if we are *wicked*, he hath hereby as certainly declared to us, how much he loves *Righteousness*, and hates the *Contrary*, as he can possibly do by the most *express Promise* which he hath made to reward the *one*, or Threatening to punish the *other*. And thus you see, what *natural Indications and Discoveries* God hath made of his unfeigned Love of *Righteousness*; which are such, as without any additional Revelation, are sufficient to convince considering Men, that God is a most sincere and affectionate Lover of Righteousness and righteous Men; and that if we will but unfeignedly submit our selves to the *eternal Laws of Goodness*, we shall thereby make our selves the best Friend, who is a never failing Fountain of *Goodness*; and who will do us more good, than all the Beings in the World, should they conspire to be our *Benefactors*; and that on the contrary, if we persist in Sin and Unrighteousness, we shall most certainly provoke him to be our mortal Enemy, and render our selves eternally odious and hateful in his Eyes; that his incensed Wrath will sooner or later break forth upon us, and prosecute us with eternal Vengeance; and that we can expect nothing but *black and dismal Issues*, while we are hated by him who is the Fountain of all Love and Goodness. All this we may be sufficiently convinc'd of, by seriously attending to those *natural Discoveries* which God hath made of his *Love of Righteousness*. But yet because he saw Mankind so unattentive to the Voice of their Nature, so unobservant of its Language and Meaning, as to run headlong on, notwithstanding all its *Countermands*, into the greatest Impiety and Wickedness; he hath been graciously pleased to add to these *natural Discoveries* of his Love of Righteousness, sundry great and eminent supernatural Ones; such, as one would think, were sufficient to rouse and awake the most *stupid and insensible Creatures* into a *serious Attention* to them. All which are reducible to these following Heads:

1. His conferring such *great and miraculous Favours* upon *righteous Persons*, and inflicting such severe *Judgments* on the *Wicked*.
2. His making so many *Revelations* to the World for the promoting of *Righteousness*, and discountenancing of *Sin*.
3. His sending his own Son into the World to transact such *mighty Things* for the Encouragement of *Righteousness*, and Discouragement of *Sin*.
4. His promising such vast Rewards to us, upon condition of our being *righteous*, and denouncing such fearful Punishments against us, in case we do neglect it,
5. His

5. His granting his *blessed Spirit* to us to excite us to, and assist us in our Endeavours after *Righteousness*.

One *supernatural* Expression of God's Love of Righteousness, is, his conferring great and *miraculous Favours* upon *righteous Persons*, and inflicting severe Judgments upon the *Wicked*. And of this we have *infinite Instances* in the several Ages of the World; there being scarce any *History*, either *sacred* or *profane*, which abounds not with them; several of which, both *Blessings* and *Judgments*, do as plainly evince themselves to be intended for *Rewards* and *Punishments*, as if they had been attended with a Voice from *Heaven* declaring the Reasons for which they were bestowed and inflicted. For how many *famous Instances* have we of the *miraculous Deliverances* of *righteous Persons*, who by an *invisible Hand* have been rescued from the *greatest Dangers*, when in all *outward Appearance*, their Condition was *hopeless* and *desperate*; and of *wonderful Blessings* that have happened in them, not only *without*, but *contrary to all secondary Causes*? Of some that have been so eminently rewarded in Kind, as that the *Good* which they received, was a most *visible Token* of the *Good* which they did; of *others* that have received the *Blessings* they ask'd, whilst they were praying for them; and obtained the Grant of them with such *distinguishing Circumstances*, as did plainly signify them to be the Answers and Returns of their *devout Desires*? And so on the contrary; how many *notable Examples* are there of such *miraculous Judgments* inflicted upon *unrighteous Persons*, as have either exceeded the Power of all *secondary Causes*, or else have been caused by them contrary to their *natural Tendency*; of Men that have been punished in the very Act of their Sin, and sometimes in the very Part by which they have offended; that have had the Evil of their Sin retaliated upon them in a *correspondent* Evil of Suffering; and been punished with those very Judgments which they have imprecated on themselves, in Justification of a *Falseness*? Now, though in the *ordinary Course* of Things, that of the *Wise Man* is most true, *that we know neither Love nor Hatred, by anything that is before us*; because ordinarily *all things come alike to all, and there is one Event to the Righteous and the Wicked*, Eccles. 9. 1, 2. yet when the Providence of God so visibly steps out of its *ordinary Course*, to bless the *Righteous* and punish the *Wicked*, it is a plain Indication of his *Love* to the *one*, and his *Hatred* to the *other*. For these *irregular Providences* have *plain and visible Tokens*, of God's *Love* and *Anger* imprinted on their Foreheads; and it would be *Stupidity* to attribute them either to a *blind Chance*, or the *necessary* *Revolutions* of *secondary Causes*, when they are stamp'd with such *legible Characters* of their being designed and intended for *Rewards* and *Punishments*. For if these were either *casual* or *necessary*, why should they not happen *alike* to all, as well as *ordinary Providences*? Why should there not be as many Examples of the *miraculous Blessings* and *Deliverances* of the *Unrighteous*, as there are of the *Righteous*? Why should not as many Men have suffered as remarkable *Evils* which they have imprinted on themselves, in attesting the *Truth*, as there have in attesting *Lies* and *Falsenesses*? Why should so many have been struck *dumb*, or *dead*, in the Act of Perjury, and not one that we ever heard of, suffer the like Calamity in witnessing the *Truth*? In a word, why should so many bad Men have suffered such Calamities as were plain Retaliations in Kind, of their *cruel* and *unjust* Actions, as *Adonibezek* (for instance) did in the cutting off his *Thumbs* and great *Toes*; whilst so few, if any, for doing Justice upon *others*, have by any such *casual* and *irregular* Providence been exposed to the *Evils* they inflicted? Since therefore in every Age of the World there have happened such *Goods* to *righteous Men*, as have the plainest Characters of *Divine Rewards* upon them; and such *Evils* to the *Wicked*, as do evidently bespeak themselves intended for *Divine Punishments*; God hath thereby sufficiently declared his *Love* of the *one*, and his *Hatred* of the *other*. For by their *Rewards* and *Punishments*, all *Law givers* do declare their *Love* and *Hatred* of the Facts they are annexed to; and therefore to be sure, if the *Supreme Law giver* had not loved *Righteousness*, and hated the contrary, he would never have so eminently rewarded the *one*, and punished the *other*, as he hath apparently done.

2. Another *supernatural* Indication of God's Love of Righteousness, is his making so many *Revelations* to the World for the promoting of Righteousness, and discountenancing of Sin. That God hath made *sundry* Revelations to the World, is evident in Fact; because there are *sundry* Revelations which have been sufficiently demonstrated by those *miraculous* Effects of the divine Power which have accompanied the Ministration of them; such are those contained in the *five Books* of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, which have been almost amply confirmed both by the Miracles which were wrought by the *inspired* Authors of them, and by the *exact* Accomplishments of the *several* Predictions contained in them: And such is also that *last* and *best* Revelation contained in the *New Testament*; which both by the *Types* and *Predictions* contained in the *Law* and the *Prophets*, and by the *infinite* Miracles wrought by *Jesus* and his *Followers*, who were the immediate Ministers of it; together with its own inherent *Goodness*; is so effectually demonstrated *divine*, that no Man who weighs the Proof of it, can suspect it, unless he be infinitely prejudiced against it. Now, if you consult these *several* *Divine* Revelations, you will plainly perceive, that the main Drift and Design of them, is to promote Righteousness, and suppress whatsoever is contrary to it; that the *several* Revelations made to *Abraham* and his Children, were all but one *repeated* Covenant of Righteousness; that the *Law of Moses* consisteth partly of *ceremonious* Rites, which were either intended for *Divine Hieroglyphicks* to instruct the *dull* and *stupid* Jews in the Principles of inward *Purity* and *Goodness*; or else for *Types* and *sacred Figures* of the *holy* Mysteries of the *Gospel*; partly, of Precepts of *moral* Righteousness, together with some few *prudential* ones that were *suitable* to the Genius and Polity of that People; and partly, of such *Promises* and *Threats* as were most apt to oblige them to the Practice of those *righteous* Precepts. As for the *Prophets*, the Substance of their Revelations was either Representations of *Sin*, together with severe Denunciations against it; or Invitations to Righteousness, together with *gracious* Promises of Rewards to follow it; or Predictions of the *Messias*, and that *everlasting* Righteousness which should be introduced by him. And then as for the *Gospel*, all the Duties of it consist either in *Instances* or *Means* of Righteousness; and all the Doctrines of it are nothing else but *powerful* Arguments and *Motives* to persuade us to the Practice of those Duties. Thus Righteousness, you see, is the *main* Center to which all true Revelation tends, the Mark at which the *righteous* Lord hath continually levelled and directed it. What a plain Demonstration therefore is this, of the *unfeigned* Love and Respect he bears it, that he did not think it sufficient to imprint a *Law of Righteousness* upon our Natures, and stamp upon our Beings so many *Indications* of his Love to it; but seeing us *swerve* and *deviate* from it, hath from time to time, by so many *loud* and *reiterated* Voices from *Heaven*, invited and called us back again: So that if he be *cordial* and *sincere* in what he says, (as it would be *absurd* and *impious* to suspect the contrary,) we cannot doubt, but he heartily loves that, which by so many immediate Revelations he hath so earnestly importuned us to embrace.

3. Another *supernatural* Indication of God's Love of Righteousness, is, his sending his own Son into the World, to transact such *mighty* Things for the Encouragement of it, and persuading Men to it. For to advance Righteousness, was the *main* Design of all those *mighty* Things which the Son of God did, and suffered in this World; the Design of all that *holy* and *innocent* Life which he led, was to propose to our Imitation a *perfect* Example of Righteousness, that so treading our Way before us, we might have, not only the Line of his *Precepts*, but also the Print of his *Footsteps* to direct us; and that by beholding so *fair* a Draught of Righteousness drawn so exquisitely to the Life, and in every part so exactly answering to the *sweetest* and most *amiable* Ideas of it, we might be both invited, and instructed to *copy* and *imitate* it in our *Actions*. For what he saith of that *illustrious* Act of *Charity* and *Humility*, his washing his Disciples Feet, is truly applicable to the whole Course of his Actions; For I have given you an Example, that you should do as I have done unto you, Joh. 13. 15. And as his Life was an Example of Righteousness, so his Death was a most *urgent* Motive to it: For hereby he made

Expi.

Expiation for our Sins, and obtained an Act of *Pardon* and *Indemnity* for every Rebel that would lay down his Arms, and return to his Duty and Allegiance; and by obtaining *this*, he hath given us infinite Encouragement to return; since if we do so, we have most ample Assurance, that we shall be received into Grace and Favour. And though I cannot deny, but if God had pleased, he might have granted such an Act of Pardon to us without the Consideration of *Christ's Death and Sacrifice*; yet I am sure, if he had it could never have been such an *effectual* Motive as it was, to oblige us to Righteousness for the *future*. For should he have granted us Pardon, merely upon our Repentance, without any *other* Motive or Consideration, he would have discovered so much *seeming easiness* and *Indulgence* in the Procedure, as would have very much imboldened such *dissingenuous Creatures* as we, to presume upon his Lenity, and turn his Grace into Wantonness. And if to prevent our presuming upon his Lenity, it was necessary that he should have some *other* Motive to pardon us, besides that of our Repentance; then it was no less *necessary*, that this *other* Motive should be such as did clearly argue and evince his *righteous Severity*: For otherwise it would have no Force in it to prevent our Presumption. And what Motive of Pardon could better evince his Severity, than the Suffering of some other in our Room, especially the Suffering of *his own Son*, the *greatest* and *dearest Person* in the whole Creation? For not to be moved to grant a *publick* Pardon to us upon our *hearty* Repentance, unless this *blessed Person* would engage to die for us, whose *infinite Greatness* gave such an *inestimable* Value to his *Sufferings*, as rendered them *adequate* to what he had deserved to suffer, was as *great* an Argument of his *inflexible* Severity against Sin, as if he should have destroyed at one Blow the whole World of Sinners. So that as he hath expressed an *infinite* Mercy to us, in admitting *his own* Son to die for us; so in refusing to pardon us upon any *less* Motive than his *precious* Death, he hath expressed an infinite Hatred to our Sins; and so that very Death which moved God to pardon us, moves us to stand in Awe of his Severity; the Death of the Son of God, upon which we are pardoned, being the most terrible Instance that ever was of the Desert of our Sin, and God's Displeasure against it. Thus our *blessed Lord* hath not only given us the *greatest* Encouragement, by procuring our Pardon, to return from our Iniquities; but by procuring it in such a *formidable* Way, he hath given us the most *dreadful* Warning of God's Severity against them. So that now we cannot think upon the Reason for which our *past* Offences are forgiven, without being vehemently moved to *future* Obedience. And thus the main Design, you see, both of *Christ's Life* and *Death*, was to recal us from Sin, to the Practice of Righteousness: And hence he is said to have *given himself for us, to redeem us from all Iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works*, Tit. 2. 14. And then he arose again from the Dead to confirm that *righteous* Doctrine which he had revealed to the World, and vibly ascended into Heaven to give us an *ocular* Demonstration of the *heavenly Rewards* of Righteousness; and there he now sits at the *right Hand* of God, to assure us, that if we persevere in Righteousness, we shall be continually befriended in the Court of Heaven, through his *all-powerful* Intercession; and hath assured us, that at the End of the World he will come to *Judgment*, and faithfully distribute those *Rewards* and *Punishments* which here he promised and threatned to *righteous* and *unrighteous* Persons. Thus the main Drift, you see, of all these *great Transactions* of our *Saviour*, was to advance the Interest of Righteousness and true Goodness. What a *mighty* Evidence therefore is this of God's *great* Love of Righteousness, that he should send *his own* most *blessed* Son upon its Errand, to transact such *mighty* Things on its Behalf? For by sending Christ into the World, and exposing him to Misery for Righteousness Sake, he did in Effect, declare, that he valued the Interest of Righteousness, more than the present Happiness and Enjoyment of his most *dearly beloved* and *only begotten Son*. And we may most certainly conclude, that had not Righteousness been infinitely dear to him, he would never have *authorized* his *dearest* Son to take such infinite Pains to promote it.

4. Another *supernatural* Indication of God's Love of Righteousness, is, his promising such vast Rewards to us upon it, and denouncing such fearful Punishments against us, if we despise and neglect it. For, besides all those Temporal Rewards he hath proposed to us, if we *seek the Kingdom of Heaven and the Righteousness thereof*, he hath erected a Heaven of *immortal Joys and Felicities* to crown and entertain it; a Heaven that contains in it all the *Beatitudes* that Human Nature is capable of, all that Truth that the most capacious Mind can comprehend, and all that Good that the vastest Affections can either crave or contain: In a Word, a Heaven, whose *Blisses* are all as large as our immense Desires, and all as lasting as immortal Beings: For 'tis a Heaven which consists in an eternal Fruition of the Fountain of infinite Truth and Goodness; whose overflowing Streams are abundantly sufficient to quench the Thirst, and make glad the Heart of every Being that understands and loves. How much therefore God loves Righteousness, you may easily guess by these vast Preparations he hath made to entertain it. For he built Heaven on purpose to lodge *righteous Souls*, and that they may see, he thinks nothing too dear for them. He feeds them with his own Perfections, and they live forever as happy as their Hearts can wish, upon the Sight, and Love, and Imitation of his Beauties. So vehemently is his Heart set upon Righteousness, that he would have every Righteous Soul dwell with him, and live upon him, and partake of all those Heavenly Joys in which his own Beatitude consists. But as for *Unrighteousness*, how much his Soul abhors it, is evident by those dire Punishments he hath denounced against it, by those dark and dismal Abodes which he hath condemned Unrighteous Souls to, to languish out a woful Eternity, to burn in Flames there that never consume, and be gnawn with Worms that never devour them; to be scared and haunted with Devils without, and Furies within, and perpetually worried Day and Night without any Ease or Intermission, with all the Horrors, Griefs and Vexations that an everlasting Hell imports. O thou merciful Father of Beings! How couldst thou have found in thy Heart to condemn thy Creatures to so wretched a State, had not their *unrighteous Practices* been infinitely odious in thine Eyes! No certainly; the Good God would never have made Hell for a Trifle, for the sake of any thing that his Nature could have endured or dispensed with: Nor would he ever have cast any unrighteous Creature into it, were it not for the implacable Abhorrence he hath to all Unrighteousness. And therefore since he hath not only made *Hell*, but warns us of it; we may be sure, he infinitely abominates *that* for which he made and threatens it; and consequently, that he is infinitely concerned for the Cause and Interest of Righteousness.

5. And Lastly, Another *supernatural* Indication of God's Love of Righteousness, is, his granting his blessed Spirit to us to excite us to, and assist us in our Endeavours after Righteousness. First, he sent his Son to propagate Righteousness by *his Ministry, his Life and Death*; and upon his Return to Heaven, he sent *his Spirit* to supply *his Room*, and carry on that dear Design, of which *his Son* had already laid the Foundation. For in Christ's Personal Absence, his Spirit acts in his stead; and was sent down from the Father by virtue of *his Intercession*, to be *his Vicegerent* in the World, to promote and enlarge *his Heavenly Kingdom*, to conquer our Hearts, and subdue our stubborn Wills to the Obedience of his most righteous Laws. So that the Holy Ghost doth now preside in the Church as the Supreme Minister, and Vicarious Power of our Saviour; and is continually employed, even as our Saviour himself was whilst he abode upon Earth, in driving on the Interest of Righteousness: For hitherto tend all his secret Operations on the Minds of Men: This is the Reason why he suggests so many good Thoughts; and by repeating them thick upon us, keeps our Minds so fixed upon them, that so, if possible, he may recollect our dispersed Minds, that are continually wandering to and fro in this infinite Maze of sensual Vanities, and engage them to attend to such Motives of Righteousness, as are most apt to excite them to wise and vertuous Resolutions. So that as in the Beginnings of Christianity, before Christian Motives to Righteousness were believed, the Holy Spirit did operate more visibly and miraculously, to confirm and demonstrate the Truth of them; so now they being believed,

believed, and thereupon the Necessity of such *miraculous Operations* superseded; his *great Work* is to *object* and *present* them to our *Minds*, and fix our *Thoughts* upon them, till they have affected in us those *good Resolutions* for which they were designed and intended: And how diligently he pursues this Work, our own Experience certifies and informs us: For how often do we find *good Thoughts* and *Motions* injected to us, we know not how, nor whence? And how many times, do these *unexpected Thoughts* kindle *holy Desires* in us, before we are aware? Which Desires being fed by a *fresh Supply* of *holy Motions* and *Suggestions*, are many times nourished into *good Resolutions*; and these being still back'd with those *repeated Motions* which do frequently press with strong Importunity upon us, are at last perfected into *firm and lasting Principles* of Action. Thus does the *Holy Spirit* continually knock at the Door of our Souls, and solicit us with the greatest Earnestness to *sober and righteous Resolutions*: And this is his *constant* Employment among Men, and will be so to the End of the World; till *Jesus*, whose *Vicerent* he is, and whose Absence he supplies, returns in Person from *Heaven*, to keep his *last and general Assizes* upon Earth. And can we imagine, that God would have all this while employed his *Holy Spirit* in the Service of Righteousness, to drive on its Interest and solicit its Cause, if it had not been infinitely *dearer* to him? No certainly, he sets a *greater Value* on the Pains of his Son and Spirit, than to busie them about a Trifle; to employ them so industriously as he has done, in an Affair which he had *little* or no Reason for. If his Heart had not been extremely set upon it, he would have found out some *other* Employment for those *divine and illustrious* Persons; and not have engaged them so everlastingly as he hath done, in the Service and Ministry of Righteousness.

Having thus explained, and proved the Proposition, *That the Righteous Lord loveth Righteousness*, I shall conclude with some *few Inferences* drawn from the whole Argument.

1. From hence I infer, that no *Religion*, or Proposition of *Religion*, can be *true*, that either directly or by *true* Consequence, is an Enemy to Righteousness. For all *true Religion* is from God; and therefore to be sure, *that* cannot be *true* which either directly or indirectly opposes that which God so *dearly* loves. This therefore is a *plain* Conviction of the *notorious* Falshood and Imposture of *Papery*, that in all those Doctrines it hath superinduced upon the *common* Principles of *Christianity*, it is an *open* Enemy to Righteousness. As for Instance; it is a *common* Principle of *Christianity*, that God alone is to be worshipped as the *Supream* Author and Fountain of our Beings; upon which the *Church of Rome* hath *superstructed* the *Invocation of Saints and Angels*; which they perform in the *same* Words, and with the *same* Address, as they do the Invocation of God himself. For though they pretend to pray to them only for their Prayers; yet in their *Publick Offices*, they do not only beg their Prayers to God for them, but also invoke them as *sovereign* Gods and *independent* Disposers of the Mercies they pray for. Thus in the *Hours of Sacrament* they implore the *Angels* to direct their Thoughts, and Words, and Actions, in the Way of Salvation, that so they may be able to fill up the Number of the *Angelical Orders*, which by the Fall of *Lucifer* was diminished; to protect them from the *Devils*, and comfort them when they are dying. Particularly, *St. Michael* they beseech to be their *Coat of Mail*, *St. Gabriel* to be their *Helmet*, *St. Raphael* to be their *Shield*, *St. Uriel* to be their *Defender*, *St. Cherubim* to be their *Health*, *St. Seraphim* to be their *Truth*; and all the *holy Angels* and *Arch-angels* to keep, protect and defend them, and bring them to *eternal Life*. And as for *Raphael*, to whom they seem to bear a more *particular* Affection, they stile him the *best Physician* both of *Body* and *Soul*; and pray him to enlighten both their *spiritual* and *car-nal Eyes*. And then, as for the *Saints*, they do as immediately address to them in their *Forms of Prayer*, for *Sanctification*, *Prayer*, *Temporal* and *Eternal Blessings*, as they can possibly do to God himself; particularly, the *Blessed Virgin* they adorn with the most *glorious* Titles of God; and in her *Psalter*, address to her in the *same* Forms of Invocation which *David* uses in his *Psalms* to God; they stile Her
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the *Lady Almighty*, the *Author of Mercy*, the *Queen of infinite Majesty*, and the *Hope of all the World*; praying, that her *Mercy* may lighten upon them as they do put their trust in her; and a great deal more to this Purpose. And as for *Joseph her Husband*, they stile him the *Support of their Lives*, and the *Pillar of the World*; beseeching him with his *Carpenters Ax* (a Tool fit only to Work upon such wooden Souls) to hew down their Sins, that they may be adopted Timber for the *Palace of Heaven*. In a word, in their present *Breviary* they implore *St. Peter* to loose them by his Word from the Bonds of Sin; and supplicate the *Apostles* who by their Word (if the Prayer lies not) do lock and unlock the *Gates of Heaven*, to loose them from all Sin by their Command. They humbly intreat *St. Genovesa* to have pity on those that hope in Her; to blot out their Sins, and send them Relief and Comfort; and implore *St. Sebastian* to preserve their *Countrey* from the Plague, to preserve their Bodies, and heal their Minds; and to win him thereunto, assure him, that all their Hope is in him. These, and several other such like Instances, there are of their Prayers both to *Angels* and *Saints*, in which they do as immediately invoke them both for *temporal*, *spiritual* and *eternal* Blessings, as they can do God himself, who is the sole Disposer of them. And is not this most palpable *Unrighteousness* towards God, to strip him thus of his *Divine Prerogatives*, and clothe his Creatures in them before his Face? But against this *Black Charge*, *Bellarmin* hath a very quaint *Salvo*: When we say, says he, *St. Peter, have Mercy upon me, or so*; we supply the Sence with this mental Construction, *Procure Mercy for me by thy Prayers or Merits*: Which is a plain Confession that the Words, are unwholsome in themselves, and cannot be safely used without being corrected by a more honest meaning; that if the *Votaries* of that Church do not take care to mend their *Publick Prayers*, with their *private Meanings*, they incur the Guilt, or at least, the Danger of Idolatry. For we cannot address more immediately in any Form of Words to God for any Mercy, than they do in these, to the *Saints* and *Angels*: And therefore, if they do not actually address to them, as Gods, 'tis because they construe those Forms into a different Sence from their most obvious Meaning. For when they say, *Lord, have Mercy upon me*, they may mean, with as little Force to the Words, *Procure me Mercy, O Lord, from St. Peter, by thy Prayers and Merits*, as when they do when they say, *St. Peter, have Mercy upon me, Procure me Mercy from God, O St. Peter, by thy Prayers and Merits*. And what a dreadful Prophanation is it of the *Divine Majesty*, to use such Forms and Address to God and *St. Peter*, as do leave our Minds indifferent, either to pray to *St. Peter* to pray to God for us, or to pray to God to pray to *St. Peter* for us? Again, 'tis a common Doctrine of Christianity, that our *Saviour* hath instituted the *holy Eucharist* to be a Memorial of his *Sufferings*, and a Seal of that everlasting Covenant which he purchased by them; upon which the *Roman Church* hath superstrucured that monstrous Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*; which, besides the Disgrace it doth to our *holy Religion*, by Reason of those ridiculous Absurdities and gross Contradictions it fastens upon it; it puts such an extravagant Sence on the first Institution of this *holy Ministry*, that if our *Saviour* had really meant it, 'twould have been enough to expole him to the general Scorn and Derision of Mankind. For if when he first instituted it, he had really pretended to convert the *Sacramental Elements* into the Substance of his own Body and Blood; this must have been the Sence of his Words and Actions; these outward Elements which but just now were made *Bread* and *Wine*, are now by my Almighty Benediction converted into the Substance of my Body and Blood: This very Body which sits here at the upper End of the Table, lies there under those Species of *Bread* and *Wine*, which you see upon it. My Head and Feet, and every Part of me, are all intirely within every Crumb of that unleavened Bread; and yet those several Crumbs, which do each contain my whole Body, contain not several Bodies; and if you divide them into ten thousand Crumbs, and distribute them into ten thousand different Places; yet in all these different Places I am the same intire and undivided Body. And though as I sit here, you see, I am at least a Foot broad, and five or six Foot long; yet in those little Crumbs that lie before you, I am no bigger than a Pin's Head; and

and yet, upon my *honest* Word, I am in all my Parts and Dimensions, under the *outward Species* of every one of them, and so am every whit as *broad*, and *thick*, and *long*, in them as I do now appear in this *visible* Body. And as for my *Blood*, which is at least *two Gallons*, though it is all contained within the *Veins* and *Vessels* of this *Body*; yet it is all at the same time within *that Cup*, which, I confess, is hardly large enough to contain the *eighth Part* of it: And though you *Twelve* shall every one drink his Share of it; yet every one shall drink it all, that is, out of this *one Cup* of my *Blood*, which at most contains but a *Quart*, each Man of you *Twelve* shall drink the whole *two Gallons*. But let not these Things astonish you, for now I am doing yet *stranger* Things than these; and first, I take my self (it being supposed both by *Papists* and *Protestants*, that *Christ* himself first ate and drank those *sacred Elements*) that is, I take my *Hands* into my own *Hands*, and put my *Mouth*, into my own *Mouth*, and swallow down my *Hands*, and *Mouth*, and *Throat*, and *Stomach* through my own *Throat* into my own *Stomach*; so that now my whole *Body* is intirely within my *Stomach*, though the whole you see, except my *Stomach*, is still intirely without it. And having thus eaten and drank up my self, in the next Place, I give my self to be eat and drank by every one of you. And now, while I am wholly buried within each of your *Stomachs*, and my own, I shall begin a *sacred Hymn*, and conclude with my *Farewel Sermon*. This, supposing our *Saviour* had intended a *real Transubstantiation*, had been the *natural* Sence, or rather *Nonsense* of his Words and Actions, in the *first* Institution of this *sacred Majesty*. And what a most *shameful* Disgrace is it to the most *righteous Religion* that ever was, to fall on such wild Extravagancies upon its *great* and *blessed* Author? Certainly, had Men set their Wits at work to *burlesque* the most *sacred* Thing, and dress it up for Laughter and Derision, they could never have invented a more *ridiculous* Disguise for it, than this of *Transubstantiation*: Besides all this, it introduces *two notorious* Pieces of Unrighteousness; the first of which is a most *gross* and *barbarous* Piece of Idolatry, viz. their adoring the *consecrated Bread* with the *highest Species* of *divine* Worship; which, if it be not *Transubstantiated* into the *Body* of *Christ*, as we are sure it is not, unless our Senses lie, and Contradictions be true; they themselves confess, is as *gross* Idolatry, as the *Laplander's* worshipping a *red Cloth* hung upon the Top of a *Spear*. Now, what *monstrous* Unrighteousness is this, for Men to rob God of his Honour, and vest a *senseless* Piece of Bread, the Workmanship of a *Baker*, into an Equality with God, and then adore, and then devour it? The *second* Piece of Unrighteousness which this *monstrous* Figment introduces, is the *Half-Communion*; in which, the *Christian World* is most unjustly robbed of one *half* of that Legacy, which *Christ* bequeathed to us in his *Last Will* and Testament; which, as *Bellarmin* tells us, was done out of Reverence to the *Transubstantiated Wine*, lest any Drop of it sticking upon *Lay-men's* Beards, should be spilt and prophaned. But this Inconvenience, by the *Cardinal's* Leave might have otherwise been easily prevented, by prohibiting the *Lay-men*, as they do their *Priests*, to receive the Sacrament with their Beards on. For I am apt to think, there is no good *Christian*, but would have been better contented to lose all his Beard, than *half* the Sacrament. So that this Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, you see, hath a most *unrighteous* Tendency, both as it disgraces the most *righteous Religion*, and introduces the most *gross* Unrighteousness. Again, *Thirdly* 'Tis a *common* Principle of *Christianity*, that *true* Repentance is indispensibly necessary to the Salvation of Sinners; upon which they have superstructed their *Sacrament of Penance*; which, joyned with *Absolution*, is of such *Sovereign* Virtue, as to *Transubstantiate* a Sorrow proceeding from the Fear of *Hell*, into *true* and *saving* Repentance: By which Doctrine they have most directly superseded all the Obligations of Righteousness. For what need I put my self to the Trouble of a *holy* and *righteous* Life, when for alarming my self before I go to *Confession*, into some *frightful* Apprehensions of *Hell*, I can be *dubbed* a true Penitent, and receive the Remission of my Sins? For now my *old* Score being all wiped off, I may Sin on merrily on a *new* Account; and when I make my next Reckoning, 'tis but being afraid of *Hell* again, and I am sure to receive a *new* Acquittance in full of all Demands.

mands and Dues. And when I have spent all my Life in this *Round* and *Circle* of Righteousness, 'tis but sending for a *Priest* at my *last Breath*, confessing my Sins, and dreading the Punishment of them, and with a few magical Words, he shall immediately conjure me to *Heaven*, or at least, out of Danger of *Hell*. Once more; it is a common Principle of Christianity, that the *Wages of Sin* is eternal Death; upon which they have introduced the Doctrines of *Purgatory* and *Indulgencies*; which, like *Simeon* and *Levi*, Brethren in Iniquity, do both conspire to render Righteousness a needless Thing. For by the *Sacrament of Penance*, the eternal Punishment of *Hell* is changed into the temporary one of *Purgatory*; and by *Indulgencies*, especially *plenary ones*, the temporary Punishment of *Purgatory* is wholly remitted, and extinguished: So that the first lessens the Punishment of Sin, and the last annihilates it. And by this Means are Sinners mightily emboldened to go on; being assured, that upon the *Sacrament of Penance* they shall commute *Hell* for *Purgatory*; and that upon *plenary Indulgence*, they shall exchange *Purgatory* for *Heaven*. Many other Instances of this Nature might be given; but it would be endless to enumerate all those *unrighteous* Principles with which their *Casuistical Divinity* abounds; the *Frauds* and *Falsifications*, the *Treasons* and *Murders*, the *Slanders* and *Perjuries*, which their *Guides of Conscience* do not only tolerate, but commend: For I will maintain, that there is scarce any Villany in Nature so *notorious*, which by the Principles of some or other of their *allowed Casuists*, may not be wholly vindicated, or at least, extenuated into *venial Crimes*. So that considering the whole Frame and Structure of the *Popish Religion*, I do most seriously believe it to be one of the most effectual Engines to undermine, and tear up the Foundations of Righteousness, that ever the *Devil* forged or made use of: And were it not for those common Principles of Christianity that do allay, and sometimes, I hope, overpower the Venom of it, I am verily persuaded, that the Religion of *Heathens* would sooner make Men *righteous*, than that of *Papists*. For I do affirm, that there is not one Principle of pure *Popery*, that is either a *Rule* of Righteousness, or a *Motive* to it; but contrariwise, that the most of its Principles seem to have been purposefully calculated to affront Mens Reason, and debauch their Manners; and if so, then we may easily guess, whether this be a *true Religion* or no, which in all its Parts is so repugnant to that which God most dearly loves.

2. Hence I infer, upon what Terms a Man may safely conclude that he is beloved of God: For if he hath that *amiable Quality* within him, which is the eternal Reason of God's Love, he may be sure, he is beloved of him. If our Souls be adorned with that Righteousness, which the *righteous Lord* loves, we may safely conclude, that we are his *Favourites*, and shall never cease to be so, whilst we continue so adorned. For 'tis as impossible for God not to love *righteous* Souls, as not to be *righteous* himself: For whilst he continues so, his own Nature must needs incline him to love all those in whom he finds his own most *amiable* Image and Resemblance. Let us not therefore persuade our selves, that we are beloved of God, either upon any *inward Whispers* and *Suggestions*, or upon any *particular Marks* and *Signs of Grace*: For both these may abuse and deceive us, and flatter our Minds into false and groundless Assurances. We may think, 'tis the *Spirit of God* that whispers to us, when all of a sudden we feel our selves surprized with *joyous* and *comfortable* Thoughts; and yet this may be nothing else but a Frisk of melancholy Vapours, heated and fermented by a *feverish Humour*. For those sudden Joys and Dejections, which are so often interpreted the *Incomes* and *Withdrawings* of the *Spirit of God*, do commonly proceed from no higher Cause than the *Shiverings* and *Burnings* of an *Ague*; and, I am very sure, that *Hysterical Fits* are very often mistaken for *spiritual Experiences*; and that when Men have most confidently believed themselves overshadowed by the *Holy Ghost*, their Fancies have been only bagged and ridden with the *Enthusiastick* Vapours of their own *Spleen*. And sometimes, I make no doubt, but this sudden Flush of *joyous Thoughts* proceeds from a worse Cause, even from the *Suggestions* of the *Devil*; who, though he hath no immediate Access to the Minds of Men, can yet doubtless, act upon our *Spirits* and *Humours*, and by their Means figure our Fancies into *sprightly Idea's*, and tickle our

our Hearts into a Rapture : And this Power of *his*, we may reasonably suppose, he is ready enough to exert upon any *mischievous* Occasion, when he finds Men willing to be deceived, and to rely upon *ungrounded* Confidences. Let us not therefore build our Hopes of the *Divine* Favour upon any such *uncertain* Foundations ; but impartially examine our selves, whether we are really *righteous* : For unless we are so, it is not more *certain* that God is *righteous*, than that these our pretended *Spiritual* Incomes and *Inundations* of Joy and Comfort, are either the *Freaks* of our own Temper, or else the *Injecti*ons of the Devil. For how can you imagine, that the God of all Righteousness and Truth, can, without *infinite* Violence to his own Nature, either love, or pretend Love to an *unrighteous* Soul ? But then, you will say, by what *Signs* and *Tokens* shall we know whether we are *righteous* or no : To which I answer, that there is nothing can be a *true* Sign and Token of Righteousness, which is *distinct* from Righteousness it self : For Righteousness is its own Sign ; and if any Man judges himself *righteous* by any Mark which is not an Act or Instance of Righteousness, he deceives and abuses his own Soul. But then, we must take Care, that we do not argue upon any one *particular* Mark or Instance of Righteousness, to our being *righteous* in *general*. For you may as well argue, that you are not *blind*, because you *hear well* ; or that you are not *deaf*, because you *taste well* ; or that you have *all* your Senses, because you have *one* ; as that you are *righteous* in the *general*, because you are so in *this* or *that particular* : And you may as reasonably conclude your self in a *State of Health*, because you have a *fresh* Colour, as that you are in a *State of Grace*, because you have *this* or *that particular* Sign of it. Well, but then how shall we resolve our selves in this most *material* Enquiry ? Why, do but consider what it is to be *righteous* ; and then reflect upon your own Motions, and you will quickly feel whether you are *righteous* or no. Now, to be *righteous* is in the *general*, to intend righteously, and to act accordingly. If you ask again, how you shall know, whether you *so* intend and act ? I shall only answer, that 'tis an *unreasonable* Question ; and that you might as well ask me whether you are *hungry* or *thirsty* : For you do as naturally feel the Motions of your Souls, as you do the Motions of your Bodies ; and for you to ask another Man, what your own Intentions are, is to make him a *Conjurer* instead of a *Casuis*t. Would it not look extremely *ridiculous* for a Man to ask his Creditor, or Customer, Good Sir, how shall I know whether I intend to pay my Debts, or am sincerely resolved not to over-reach you ? Should any Man ask me such a Question, I should only bid him consult himself ; and if then he suspected his own Honesty, I should shrewdly suspect he had too much Reason for it. If you *intend* righteously, you *intend* it *knowingly* ; and if you *knowingly* *intend* it, you cannot but *know* that you *intend* it. If you cannot know whether you intend and act righteously, you cannot know how to do it ; and if you cannot know how to do it, you are not Subjects *capable* of Morality ; but must of necessity *live* and *act* at Random, and blunder on, like Travellers in the dark, without being able to determine whether you go *backward* or *forward*. If therefore you would know whether you are *righteous* Men or no, do not go about to perplex and intangle your selves, in the Wilderness of *Signs* and *Tokens* : For if you had a *thousand* Signs of Grace, you can never safely conclude you are *righteous*, till upon an *impartial* Review of your selves, you do feel that you intend and act righteously ; and then, and not till then, you may build upon it, that God loves you. For God's Love is a *constant* and *immutable* Thing ; and in this the Constancy of it consists ; not that it is always *fixt* upon the same Person ; but that 'tis unchangeably determined to the same Motive ; and this Motive is Righteousness. So that if he find this *Motive* in us, he will be sure to love us, so long as it continues : But if from *Righteous* we become *Unrighteous*, he must either change his Affection, or else cease to love us. For should he still love on, when the Reason is ceased for which he loved us, he must either love us for no Reason, or for a Reason that is directly contrary to that for which he loved us first ; and consequently, his Love must either be a *blind* Fondness, or else a *fickle* and *inconstant* Passion. If therefore Righteousness be the Reason that moves the

righteous

righteous Lord to love, we grossly flatter and abuse our selves, if we presume, that he loves us while we are *unrighteous*. Wherefore, as we would not ruine our selves with relying upon *vain Hopes*, Hopes that will sink underneath us, and leave us eternally *desperate and miserable*; let us never conclude that we are *beloved of God*, till upon an *impartial Trial* of our selves, we can conclude, that we are sincerely *righteous*.

3. From hence I infer, what *grand Encouragement* we have to be *righteous*: For that God loves Righteousness, is a plain Demonstration that 'tis the most *amiable* Thing in the World; and that it best deserves the Affections of all *Rational* Beings, since it hath won his, who never loves, but upon the best Reason. And what a most *glorious* Thing is it, to be adorned with the *best* of Beauties, which by such an *invincible Charm*, endears the Heart of the most *glorious* Being in the World? If there be so much Honour paid to a Beauty that can smite and enslave an *Earthly Potentate*; what is there due to *that*, that can constrain the God of *Heaven and Earth* to fall in love with us? For what higher Mark can our Ambition aim at, than that of being beloved by the *greatest* and most *lovely* Being? Doubtless, to be God's Favourite and Image, is the *highest* Advancement that any Creature can aspire to; and were I born *King* of all the Kings of the Earth, and had all their *Crowns and Scepters* at my Feet, I am sure my Reason would tell me, that to be *beloved of God*, would be a *greater* Glory to me, than to be obeyed from Pole to Pole: And should I entertain a Thought of exchanging the Honour of being a *God-like* Creature, and the Favourite of *Heaven*, for the *Crown and Empire* of the World, my Conscience would tell me, that I degraded my self, and prostituted *my own* Glory: For next to that of being a God my self, the *highest* Glory I can think of, is to be a Friend to God; and this I am sure to be, as soon as I commence a *righteous Man*. And shall I stand so much in *my own* Light, O *foolish Creature that I am*, as to refuse his Friendship, when I may have it on such reasonable Terms, and shall need no *other* Endearment to introduce me into his Favour, but only that of Righteousness? O *thou most excellent Beauty*, with whose *Charms the God of Heaven is inflamed!* What shall I do to make thee mine! How shall I obtain to be adorned with thy *Heavenly Lustre!* I will go to the *blessed Fountain* from whence thou art derived; and with a *Heart hungry and thirsting* after thee, beseech him to *infuse thy Streams* into my Soul. I'll *shun whatsoever is contrary* to thee, and do *whatsoever thou commandest me*, and never cease *Writing* after thy fair Copies, till I have transcribed thee into my Nature. And who would not, that sets any Value upon the Glory of being dear to God? For besides the Honour of being his Favourites, what an infinite Advantage may we expect to reap from it? For what may we not promise our selves from the Grace and Favour of the *Great Sovereign* of Beings, who doth whatsoever pleases him in both Worlds, and hath the absolute Disposal of all the Blessings that either *Heaven or Earth* affords? Doubtless, we may safely promise to our selves every Thing, both from *below and above*, that can either do us good *here*, or contribute to our Happiness *hereafter*. For so the *Psalmist* tells us, that such is his Love of Righteousness, that he *will give both Grace and Glory*, and that *no good Thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly*, Psal. 84. 11. Who would not then be tempted to Righteousness upon the Prospect of being a Favourite of God, and of the infinite Glory and Advantage which redounds from thence?

4. And Lastly, From hence I infer, how *inexcusable* we are, if we persist in Sin, after the many Discoveries which God hath made to us of his Love of Righteousness. Had we any Reason to suppose that God is indifferently affected towards *Righteousness and Sin*, it would be a fair Excuse for *unrighteous* Persons: For what great Matter would it be, which of the two Contraries we chuse, if both were *indifferent* to God, who best understands the Worth and Value of Things? But now, when God hath discovered such a *zealous Concern* for Righteousness, and an Abhorrence of its *Contrary*, by so many clear Indications both *natural* and *supernatural*; there is no Ground or Colour for any such Excuse. For now no Man can be excusably ignorant which way God's Heart is inclined; and we must wil-

willfully shut our Eyes, if we do not discern which of the *two* Contraries he would have us pursue ; and therefore, if notwithstanding this, we still persist in *Unrighteousness*, we do in Effect declare, that we regard not God, and that we will do what we list, let him *will* what he pleases ; that in the Conduct of our Actions, we will have the *sole* Disposal of our selves ; and are resolved, that God shall have nothing to do with us, and that we will not concern our selves in any of our *Choices* and *Actions*, whether he be pleased or displeased with them : This is the *plain* Sence of our Perseverance in Unrighteousness under all those *clear* Discoveries which God hath made of his Aversion to it. Now, how *inexcusable* is this, for a Creature to behave it self so insolently toward the *Author* and *Owner* of its Being ; to make him stand for a *Cypher* in his *own* Creation ; and to take no more Notice of him, than if he were the most *impertinent* and *insignificant* Being in the World ? For now it's plain, that our *unrighteous Doings* proceed from our *rude* Contempt and *Regardlessness* of his *heavenly* Will : We know well enough, what he would have us do ; but either we do not think him worth the minding ; or if we do, we are resolv'd to *behave* our selves as if we did not. 'Tis true, he hath not made as full a Discovery of his Will to *some*, as he hath to *others* ; but yet it is plain, he hath so sufficiently discovered it to all, that none can pretend to the Excuse of Ignorance. For, as for the *Heathens*, though they have no revealed Discoveries of it without them ; yet they have a *Bible* within them, the *large* and *legible Bible* of Nature, which lies continually open before them ; and proposes to their View in *fair* and *distinct* Characters, the Notion of God, the Distinctions of *Good* and *Evil*, and the *eternal* Laws of Righteousness : And therefore, if notwithstanding this, they will be so regardless of its *great* and *blessed* Author, as either not to attend to, or not comply with these *natural* Discoveries of his Will ; what Excuse can they make why they should not perish in their *own* Obstinacy ? For, as the *Apostle* tells us, though *they have not the Law*, i. e. the revealed Law ; yet *they did* (or at least might have done) *by Nature the Things contained in the Law* ; and therefore *as many* of them *as have sinned* without this revealed Law, shall also perish without it ; that is, by the Sentence of the *Law of Nature*, Rom. 2. 12, 14. And then, as for the *Jews*, besides those *natural* Indications of God's Love of Righteousness which they had in common with the *Heathens*, they had sundry *supernatural* ones ; they had sundry *great* and *notorious* Examples of God's rewarding *righteous*, and punishing *wicked* Men ; and the *outward* Revelation of the *Law of Moses*, the moral Part of which, was a *new* Edition of the *Law of Nature* ; and did contain within the *Rine* and *Letter* of it the most *sublime* and *spiritual* Precepts of Righteousness : And the *Ceremonial* Part of which was, (though an *obscure*) yet *intelligible* Representation of all those *spiritual* Motives to Righteousness which *Christianity* contains. So that, would they but have attended either to the *spiritual* Sence of their Law, or to the *Sermons* of their *Prophets*, which very much cleared and explained it, they could not have been ignorant either of any Part of their Duty, or of any considerable Motive that was needful to press and engage them to it. If therefore notwithstanding this, they were so regardless of God, as to take no Notice of those many sensible Distinctions which his Providence hath made between *righteous* and *unrighteous* Men, in blessing the one, and punishing the other, of which he gave them so many signal Examples ; if they had so *little* Reverence for his Authority, as neither to mind his Law *within*, nor his Law *without* them ; or, if they minding the *latter*, were so extremely heedless, as to rest in a mere Conformity to the *Letter* of it, without ever attending to its *spiritual* Sence and Meaning ; upon what reasonable Pretence can their Stupidity be excused ? But then lastly, as for us *Christians*, we have not only all those *natural* Indications of God's Love of Righteousness which the *Heathens* had, and all those *supernatural* ones which the *Jews* had ; but we have all these *latter* with much greater Advantage than the *Jews* : For they are all set before us in a clearer Light, and presented much more naked to our View. For as they are proposed to us, they are neither wrapt up in *mystical* Sences, nor clouded over with *typical* Representations ; but laid before us in the most *plain* and *easse* Propositions. The *literal*

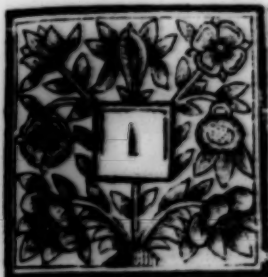
Sence of our Precepts of Righteousness, and of all our *Promises* and *Threats*, is the *mystical* Sence of theirs; and all those *Christian Motives* to Righteousness which were delivered to them in dark Riddles, and *obscure* and *typical* Adumbrations, are brought forth to us from behind the Curtain, and proposed in *plain* and *popular* Articles of Faith: So that if we still continue in Unrighteousness, we are of all Men in the World the most *inexcusable*. The *Heathens* may plead against the *Jews*, that their *Law of Nature* was not so clear in its Precepts; nor yet so cogent in its *Motives*, as the *Law of Moses* was. The *Jews* may plead against us *Christians*, that their *Law of Moses* was neither so express in its Precepts; nor yet so intelligible in its *best* and most *powerful Motives*: But as for us *Christians*, we have nothing at all to plead; but, by *our own* Obstinacy against the clearest Discoveries both of our Duty, and the Motives which oblige us to it, are condemned to *everlasting* Silence. So that when at the *last Tribunal* it shall appear, that we have persisted in Unrighteousness, we must expect the Reproaches of all the *reasonable* World; to be *exploded* and *hissed* at, not only by the *universal Choir* of *Saints* and *Angels*; but by *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and by the *Devils* themselves; who will all conspire with *our own* Consciences, to second that *dreadful* Sentence which shall then pass upon us, with the general Acclamation of *Just and Righteous art thou, O Lord, in all thy Ways*. Wherefore, as we would not perish for ever without Pity or Excuse, let us be persuaded to abandon all *Unrighteousness* and *worldly Lusts*, and to live *soberly*, and *righteously*, and *godly* in this present World; and then we may assure our selves, that the righteous Lord who loves Righteousness, will love us also for the sake of it; and express his Love to us, in *blessing* and *preserving* us *here*, and crowning us with *Glory* and *Happiness* *hereafter*. And this we beseech thee to grant, O thou immutable Lover of Righteousness, even for *Jesus Christ* his sake; To whom with thy self, and thy eternal Spirit, be ascribed by us, and all the World, all Honour, and Glory, and Power, from this time forth, and for evermore. Amen.

DISCOURSE XXII.

UPON,

MAT. xvi. 26.

What is a Man profited if he shall gain the whole World and lose his own Soul? or, What shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?



IN the 24th Verse, our Saviour urges his Disciples to that necessary Duty of *denying themselves*, that is, of surrendering up their Wills to the Conduct of his, and renouncing all their *Worldly Interest*, when it comes in Competition with their Duty, and of taking up their Cross, and following him; that is, of preparing themselves to endure Persecution for his sake, and to persist courageously in the Profession and Practice of his Religion, whatsoever Oppositions they should meet with from the World. And to press them hereunto, he urges this Argument, *Ver. 25. For whosoever will save his Life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his Life shall find it.* Where the Greek Word *ψυχή*, which we render *Life*, may perhaps be better rendered *Himself*, it being familiar both with Hebrews and Syrians, to call a Man's Life and Soul *Himself*: So the Psalmist, *thou shalt not leave my Soul in Hell*, that is, thou shalt not leave me Perishing in my Grave, *Psal. 16. 10.* And *Levit. 20. 25. Ye shall not make your Souls abominable, i. e. your selves*; and that it should be so rendered here is evident, because St. Luke so expounds it, *What is a Man profited, if he gain the whole World and lose himself, or be cast away?* Luke 9. 25. And indeed the Soul being the *Principal Part* of a Man, and that which advances him into a *Species* of Being above that of a *meer Animal*, may very well be called *himself*, according to that of Hierocles, *ὅτι ὁ εἰς ἡ ψυχή, τὸ δὲ σῶμα σὸν, τὰ δὲ ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος.* *Thy Soul is Thee, thy Body thine, and thy outward Goods thy Bodies.* And if instead of *Life* we render *ψυχή* *Himself*, the Words will be very plain and easy; for whosoever will save himself by renouncing me and my Religion, shall lose himself for ever; and whosoever will be content to lose himself for my sake, shall save himself for ever. And this he farther enforces in the Text, *What is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? or, What shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?* that is, What will it avail a Man to gain the whole World, if he for ever ruin himself by it? and when he hath thus ruined himself, What would he give, if it were in his Power to save and recover himself again? The Words thus explain'd, I shall resolve the sense of them into these five Propositions.

I. That a Man, or the Soul of a Man, is a Thing of *inestimable Price* and Value; for our Saviour here weighs it against the whole World, that is, against all the *Pleasures, Profits, and Honours* that this *inferiour World* can afford; and declares, That in the *just Ballance* of his Esteem, it out-weighs them all. And certainly that must needs be *exceeding precious*, whose Worth the whole World cannot counterpoise.

II. That this *precious Soul* may be lost. This our Saviour plainly supposes in these Words, *If he lose his own Soul.*

III. That our *renouncing of Christ* and his Religion will most certainly infer this Loss. For these Words, as I have shew'd you, our Saviour urges as an Argument to dissuade Men from *Apostacy*; but if without *losing* our Souls, we might

renounce him, and *apostatize* from him, there would be no *Force* in all this Argument to dissuade us from it.

IV. That when this Soul is *lost*, 'tis *lost* irrecoverably. *What shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?* Where the Greek Word ἀντάλλαγμα, which we render *Exchange*, is used in the same Sense with ἕξιλασμα, which signifies a Price of Redemption, denoting that if a Man should or could give never so much to buy his Soul from Perdition, yet no *Price* of Redemption will be *taken* for it.

V. That this *irrecoverable* Loss of a Soul, is of such a *vast* Moment, that the Gain of the whole World is not *sufficient* to compensate it. *What is a Man profited*, that is, he is not at all *profited*; nay, he is so far from *that*, that he is a *vast* Loser.

I. That the Soul of a Man is a Thing of an *inestimable* Price and Value. And for the Proof of this Proposition, I shall endeavour these *two* Things.

First, To represent to you of what *vast* Worth it is, in respect of its own *natural* Capacities.

Secondly, To shew you of what *vast* Esteem it is, in the Judgment of all those, who, as we must needs suppose, do best *understand* the Worth of it.

1. I shall endeavour to represent to you, of what *vast* Worth it is, in respect of its own *natural* Capacities; particularly in these *four*. (1.) In respect of its Capacity of *Understanding*. (2.) Of *Moral Perfection*. (3.) Of *Pleasure* and *Delight*. (4.) Of *Immortality*.

1. The Soul of Man is of *vast* Worth in respect of its Capacity of *Understanding*. For certainly to *understand*, is the *greatest* and *noblest* Operation that a Being is *capable* of; for it is this that gives Beauty and Excellence to all our *other* Operations, whether they be *Natural* or *Moral*: 'Tis this that proposes the *Ends*, and directs the Course, and prescribes the Measures of all our *other* Actions; and tho' we had never so much *Force* or *Power*, yet unless we had *Understanding* to guide and manage it, it would be altogether insignificant: For *blind* Power acts at random, and if we had the Force of a *Whirl-wind*, yet without a *Mind* to steer and manage it, it would be an *equal* Chance whether we did *well* or *ill* with it: So that unless there were some *Understanding*, either *within* or *without* us, to conduct our *active Powers*, and determine them to our *Good*, we were as good be altogether without them; because while they act by *Chance*, it is at least an *equal* Lay whether they will *injure* or *advantage* us. Since therefore *Understanding* is the *Rule* and *Measure* of all our *other* Powers, it necessarily follows, that *it self* is the *greatest* and *noblest* of them all. What an *excellent* Being therefore must a Soul be, in which this *great* and *Sovereign* Power resides: A *Power*, that can collect into it self such *prodigious* Numbers of *simple Apprehensions*, and by comparing *one* with the *other*, can connect them into *true* Propositions, and upon *each* of these can run such *long* and *curious* Descants of Discourse, till it hath drawn out all their Consequents into a Chain of *wise* and *coherent* Notions, and sorted these into such *various Systems* of *useful* Arts and Sciences: That can discern the *Harmonious* Contextures of Truths with Truths, the *secret* Links and Junctures of *coherent* Notions, trace up *Effects* to their *Causes*, and sift the *remotest* Consequents to their *natural* Principles. That can cast *abroad* its *sharp sighted* Thoughts over the whole *Extent* of Beings, and, like the *Sun* with its *out stretched* Rays, reach the *remotest* Objects. That can in the *twinkling* of an *Eye* expatiate through all the *Universe*, and keep *Correspondence* with *both* Worlds; can prick out the Paths of the *Heavenly* Bodies, and measure the Circles of their Motion, span the whole *Surface* of the Earth, and dive into its *Capacious* Womb, and there discover the *numerous* Offsprings with which it is continually teeming. That can sail into the World of *Spirits* by the *never varying* Compass of its *Reason*, and discover those *invisible* Regions of *Happiness* and *Misery*, which are altogether out of our sight, whilst we stand upon this *hither* Shore. In a word, That can ascend from Cause to Cause, to *God* who is the Cause of all, and with its *Eagles eyes* can gaze upon that *glorious* Sun, and dive into

into the *infinite Abyss* of his *divine* Perfections. What an *excellent* Being therefore is that *Soul*, that is *endowed* with such a *vast* Capacity of *Understanding*, and with its *piercing* Eye can reach such an *immense* Compass of Beings, and travail through so *vast* an *Horizon* of Truth? Doubtless if *humane* Souls had no other Capacity to *value* themselves by, but only this, *this* were enough to give them *Prebeminence* over all *inferiour* Beings, and *render* them the most *glorious* Part of all this *sublunary* World.

2. The *Soul* of Man is of *vast* Worth, in respect of its Capacity of *Moral Perfection*. For by the Exercise of those *human* *Virtues* which are *proper* to it, in this state of *Conjunction* with the *Body*, it is capable of raising it self to the *Perfection* of those *Angelical* Natures, which of all *Creatures* do most nearly *approach* and *resemble* the *great* *Creator*, and *Fountain* of all *Perfection*. For by keeping a *due* *Restraint* upon its *bodily* *Appetites*, and thereby gradually *weaning* it self from the *Pleasures* of the *Body*, it may by *degrees* be *educated* and *trained* up to lead the *Life*, and *relish* the *Joys* of *naked* and *immortal* *Spirits*; it may be *contempered* to an *incorporeal* State, so as to be able to enjoy it self without *eating* and *drinking*, and live most happily upon the *Fare* of *Angels*, upon *Wisdom* and *Holiness*, and *Love* and *Contemplation*. And then by governing its *own* *Will* and *Affections*, by the *Laws* of *Reason* and *Religion*, it may by *degrees* improve it self so far in all these *Moral* *Endowments*, which are the *proper* *Graces* of every *reasonable* *Nature*, as to be at last as perfectly *wise* and *reasonable* in its *own* *Choices* and *Refusals*, in its *Love* and *Hatred*, in its *Desires* and *Delights*, as the *Angels* themselves are. For though it cannot be expected that in this *imperfect* State, a *Soul* should arrive to such a *Pitch* as this, yet even now it may be *growing* up and *aspiring* to it; which, if it doth, as I shall shew you by and by, when *this* is *expired*, it hath *another* *Life* to live, which being antecedently prepared for by those *spiritual* *Improvements* it hath made *here*, will furnish it with *Opportunities* of *improving* infinitely faster than *here* it did, or possibly could. For in that *Life* it shall not only be *freed* from those many *Incumbrances* which do *here* retard it in its *spiritual* *Progress*, nor shall it only be associated with a *World* of *pure* and *blessed* *Spirits*, whose *holy* *Example*, and *wise* *Converse*, will doubtless wonderfully edifie and improve it; but be also admitted into a more *intimate* *Acquaintance* with *God*, who is the *Author* and *Pattern* of all *Perfection*; the sight of whose *ravishing* *Beauty* will *inflame* it with a most *ardent* *Love* to him, and *excite* it to a most *vigorous* *Imitation* of him: All which considered, it is not to be imagined how much the State of *Heaven* will immediately *improve* those *happy* *Souls* that are prepared and disposed for it. But then considering that *Moral Perfection* is as *infinite* as the *Nature* of *God*, in which there is an *Infinity* of *Holiness* and *Justice*, and *Goodness*, within this *boundless* *Subject*, there will be room enough for *Souls* to make *farther* and *farther* *Improvements* in, even to *Eternity*. And then when they shall still be growing on so fast, and yet be still *for ever* improving, to What a *transcendent* *Height* of *Glorry* and *Perfection* will they at last arrive? For tho' no *finite* *Soul* can ever arrive to an *infinite* *Perfection*, yet still it may be growing on to it, because there will still be *possible* *Degrees* of it beyond its *present* *Attainments*; and when it is arrived to the farthest *imaginable* *Degree*, yet still it will be *capable* of farther, and so farther and farther, to all *Eternity*. And if so, O *Blessed* *God*! of What a *Capacious* *Nature* hast thou made these *Souls* of ours, which tho' they will doubtless *improve* in *Goodness*, as fast in the *other* *Life*, as is possible for them, with all the *Advantages* of a *Heavenly* State, yet will never attain to an *utmost* *Period*, but still be growing *perfecter* and *perfecter* *for ever*?

3. The *Soul* of Man is of *vast* Worth, in respect of its *immense* Capacities of *Pleasure* and *Delight*. For its Capacity of *Pleasure* must necessarily be as *large* and *extensive*, as its Capacity of *Understanding*, and of *Moral Perfection*; because the *proper* *Pleasure* of a *Soul* results from its *own* *Knowledge* and *Goodness*, from its *farther* *Discoveries* of *Truth*, and *farther* *Proficiency* in *inward* *Rectitude* and *Virtue*, and consequently as it improves *farther* and *farther* in *Understanding*,

and in *Moral Perfection*, it must still gather *more and more* Fuel to feed and *encrease* its own Joy and Pleasure. For the Pleasure of every Being, consists in the *vigorous* Exercise of its Faculties about *convenient* and *agreeable* Objects; but the *Faculties* of a Soul are *Understanding* and *Will*, to which the only *agreeable* Objects are *Truth* and *Goodness*; and therefore the more *Truth* there is in the *Mind*, and the more *Goodness* there is in the *Will*, the more vigorously will they *employ* and *exercise* themselves about them, and consequently the more they will be *pleased* and *ravished*. Since therefore, every *new* Discovery of *Truth*, and every *new* Degree of *Goodness*, gives *new* Life to our *Minds* and *Wills*, and renders both more *sprightly* and *vigorous*, it hence necessarily follows, that our Souls are capable of as much *Pleasure*, as they are of *Truth* and *Goodness*; and how vastly *capable* they are of both these, I have already shew'd you. So that it is not to be imagined by us, who have here so *little* Experience, what *Heavens* of Joy a Soul is *capable* of; only at present we find by Experience, that the more we improve in *Knowledge* and *Goodness*, the more *pleasant* and *cheerful* we find and feel *our selves*, and that our *Faculties* still grow more *active* and *lightsome*, the more we disburden them of that *Ignorance* and *Sin* that *cloggs* and *incumbers* them. And upon *great* Proficiencies in *Knowledge* and *Vertue*, we find a *strange* Alacrity within our selves; we are as it were in *Heaven* upon Earth, and do feel a *Paradise* springing up within us, the *Fragrance* of whose Joys grows many times so *strong*, that our *frail* Mortality can hardly bear them. When therefore such *Souls* do cast off this Mortality, which now doth only fetter and entangle them, and have made their Entrance into the *invisible* Regions of *Blessedness*, How *sprightly* and *active*, how *lightsome* and *cheerful* will they feel themselves? For in the *first* Moment of their Admission, all that *Mist* of *erroneous* Prejudice, which now interrupts their Prospect of *Truth*, and all those Remains of *irregular* Affection, that check and distract them in their Choice of *Goodness*, will be for ever chased from their *Minds* and *Wills*, by the *clear* Light of the *Heavenly State*; and their Faculties having disburthen'd themselves, and shaken off every Clogg, with What *unspeakable* Vigour will they *move* and *act*, especially in the Presence of such *suitable* Objects as the *Heavenly State* will present before them? When *infinite Truth*, and *infinite Goodness*, shall be always present to their *free* Minds and undistracted Wills, and nothing shall *interpose* to hinder them either in seeing the *one*, or in choosing the *other*; here will be work enough for both to all *Eternity*: And both being freed from all Incumbrance, the *one* will be discovering every *Moment*, farther and farther, into that *infinite Truth* which it loves and admires, and the *other* will be improving every *Moment*, more and more, in that *infinite Goodness* which it chooses and adores. And then every *new* Discovery, and *new* Improvement, will spring *new* Heavens of Joy in the Soul, and by reason of those *new* Acquests of *Truth* and *Goodness*, which we shall every *Moment* make, we shall every *Moment* be entertained with *new* Pleasures, and so before we have spent *one* Joy, *another* will succeed, and *another* that, and so on for ever. For when a *God* of *infinite Truth* and *Goodness*, becomes the *Objective Happiness* of a *finite* Nature, which cannot comprehend and enjoy him, but in an *infinite* Succession, every *new* Delight the *Injoyment* of him creates in us, must necessarily raise a *new* Desire, and every *new* Desire, immediately find a *new* Delight, and so round again to all *Eternity*. Of What a *vast* Capacity therefore is this Soul of ours, in which there is room enough *successively* to entertain all the *ravishing* Joys and Pleasures that make an *Everlasting Heaven*? That can drink in those *deep* Rivers of *Pleasure*, as fast as they *spring* up, and *flow* from *God's* right hand for evermore? What Tongue can express the *innumerable* Joys that such a Soul can hold, whose Capacity is so *large* as *Heaven*, and so *near* to *infinite*, as to be able to contain all those Joys and Pleasures that *infinite Truth* and *Goodness* can create?

4. And *Lastly*, The Soul of Man is of *vast* Worth, in respect of its Capacity of *Immortality*. For by its Operations it is evident, that the Soul is not composed of *corruptible Matter*, but is a *spiritual* and *immaterial* Substance; for it it

were

were *Matter*, it would *act* and *move* only when *other Matter* presses upon it, and not be able to determine the Course of its *own Motion*, but would be forced to move *backwards* or *forwards*, according as it was *thrust* on by that *outward Matter* that continually moves and presses upon it, and all its *Motions* would be as *necessary* as that of a Stone in the *Air*, when it is thrust up by an *impressed Force*, and pressed down again by the weight of the *Air* above it: Whereas in this Soul of ours, we sensibly *feel* and *experience* a *natural Liberty* of acting, a Power to move it self, and to determine its *own Motions* which way it pleaseth: when it is pressed *forward* never so vigorously by the *strong Impulses* of *outward Objects*, it is in its Power to *go on* or *retreat*, and to *divert* the Current of its Thoughts into a quite *contrary Channel* to that whereinto it is thrust and directed by all the Impressions of its Sense. For thus in the midst of the *Alarums* and *Shoutings* of an *Army*, of the *Noises* of Drums and Trumpets ringing in our Ears, our Soul can recollect it self, and reduce its *scattered Thoughts* into *profound Contemplations* of a *sweet and blessed Peace*; and when it is pressed from *without*, with never so much Importunity to *this* or *that particular Choice*, it is in its Power to *reject* the Motion, and to *choose* the quite contrary. By all which it is *apparent*, That the Soul hath an *innate Liberty* of acting, that *she* is not *necessitated* from *without* by the *different Concourses* and *Motions* of the *several Particles* of *Matter*; but that all the Diversity of her *Wills* and *Opinions*, is principally owing to her *own Freedom* and *Power* of Self-determination, and to make the *least* doubt of it, is to question the *common Sense* and *Experience* of Mankind. Since therefore the Soul is not determined in its *Motions* by the *different Pressures* of *material Things*, as all *other Matter* is, but hath power to *swim* against the *Torrent*, and *move* quite counter to all *foreign Impressions*, it hence necessarily follows, that it is *immaterial*. And indeed, considering how much its *Operations* do exceed the *utmost Power* of *dull and passive Matter*, I cannot but wonder that any Man should be so *forsaken* of his *Reason*, as to rank it among *material Things*; for How is it *possible* that a *Piece* of *dull unactive Matter*, that a *little Grass* or *Dirt*, or *Mire*, after all the *Refinings*, *Macerations*, and *Maturation*s, that can be *performed* by the help of *Motion*, should ever be able to make a *thinking Being*, or grow up into the Soul of a *Philosopher*? That a Company of *dead Atoms*, which cannot move, unless they are moved, can ever be *capable* of framing *Syllogisms* in *Mood* and *Figure*, and disputing *Pro* and *Con*, whether they are *Atoms* or no? That such *inert* and *sluggish Bodies* should by their *impetuous jostling* together, awaken *one another* out of their *senseless Passiveness*, and make *each other* hear and feel their *mutual Knockings* and *Jostlings*; and then from this *Sense* into which they have thus awakened *one another*, and (which they are as *incapable* of as a *Musical Instrument* is of hearing its *own Sounds*, or taking pleasure in the *harmonious Airs* that are play'd upon it) should proceed and consult together to make *wise Laws*, and contrive the *best Models* of *Government*; to investigate the *Natures* of *Things*, and deduce from them the *several Systems* of *Arts* and *Sciences*. In a word, How is it *possible* that a Company of *fluid Motes* and *Particles* of *Matter*, should ever be so *artificially complicated* and *twisted* one with another, as to form an *Understanding* that can *lift up* its *Eyes*, and look beyond all this *sensible World*, into that of *immaterial Beings*, and conceive *abstracted Notions* of *Things*, which can never be *Objects* to any *material Senses*: Such as a *pure Point*, *Equality* and *Proportion*: *Symmetry*, and *Asymmetry* of *Magnitudes*; the *Rise* and *Propagation* of *Dimensions*, *infinite Divisibility*, and the *like* *Notions* that never were in *Matter*, nor consequently could ever be extracted out of it: That can correct the *Errors* of all our *material Perceptions*, and demonstrate *Things* to be vastly different from what they apprehend and report them. Can *prove* the *Sun*, for instance, to be *one hundred and sixty times bigger* than the *Earth*, when to our *Eye* and *Imagination*, it appears no *bigger* than a *Bushel*. That can lodge *within* it self, all that *Mass* of *sensible Things* which taketh up so much room *without* it, and when it hath piled them up upon *one another*, in *vast* and most *prodigious Numbers*, is still as *capacious* of more,

as when it was altogether *empty*. In a word, That can grasp the *Universe* with a *Thought*, and comprehend the *whole* Latitude of *Heaven* and *Earth*, within its *own indivisible* Center; How *senseless* is it to imagine, that such *noble* Operations as these, can be perform'd by a *meer* Complex of *dead Atoms*, and *senseless* Particles of Matter? And if they cannot, as doubtless they cannot, then from hence it will necessarily follow, That the Soul of Man is an *immaterial* Thing. Furthermore we see, That tho' the Soul takes in *Objects* of all *sizes*, yet when once they are *in*, they are not as *Bodies* in a *material* Place, in which the *Greater* take up more room than the *Less*: For the *Thought* of a *Mile*, or ten thousand Miles, doth no more *fill* or *stretch* a *Soul*, than that of a *Foot* or an *Inch*, or a *Mathematical Point*. And whereas all *Matter* hath its *Parts*, and those extended *one* without *another*, into *Length* and *Breadth*, and *Thickness*, and so is *measurable* by *Inches*, *Tards*, or *Solid Measures*; there is no such Thing as *measurable* Extension in any thing belonging to the Soul: For in *Cogitation*, which is the *Essence* of a Soul, there is neither *Length*, nor *Breadth*, nor *Thickness*; nor is it *possible* to have any *Conceit* of a *Foot* of Thought, or a *Tard* of Reason, a *Pound* of Wisdom, or a *Quart* of Virtue. And if what belongs to a Soul be *immaterial*, it will necessarily follow, That the Soul it self is *immaterial* too, and as such, *capable* of *Immortality*. For *immaterial* Natures being *pure* and *simple*, having neither *contrary* Qualities, nor *divisible* Parts in them, as *material* Things have, can have no Principles of *Alteration* and *Corruption* in them; and being *devoid* of these, they must needs be *capable* of *living* and *subsisting* for ever. What *noble* Beings therefore are the Souls of Men, which, together with those *vast* Capacities of *Understanding*, of *Moral Perfection*, of *Joy* and *Pleasure*, are naturally *capable* of *Immortality*, and consequently of *improving* in *Knowledge*, in *Goodness*, and in *Joy* and *Pleasure*, unto all *Eternity*? And therefore, certainly a Soul must needs be a most *precious* Thing, that can thus *out-live* all *sublunary* Beings, and *subsist* for ever in so *sublime* a State of *Glory* and *Beatitude*.

Having thus shewn you the *invaluable* Worth of the Soul, in respect of its *own* natural Capacities, I proceed,

2. To shew you of what *vast* Esteem it is in the Judgment of all those, who we must needs suppose to best understand the *Worth* of it; and that is the *whole* World of *Spirits*. For to be sure, *Spirits* must best understand the Excellency of *Spirits*, because they have a *clearer* In-sight into *each others* Natures, and a more *immediate* Prospect of the *Virtue*, *Power* and *Excellency*, of *each others* *Faculties*. For as for us, whilst we are in this *embodied* State, and do understand by *corporeal* Organs, we generally judge of the *Worth* and *Excellency* of Things, by the Impression they make upon our Senses; and as these are *more* or *less* gratified and affected with them, we set a *higher* or *lower* Value upon them. Since therefore *Spirits* are a *sort* of *Beings*, that cannot touch or affect our *Bodily* Senses, it is impossible we should be *competent* Judges of the *true* Worth and Value of them; and therefore in this matter, we ought to be guided by the Judgment of *Spirits*, who must needs be *supposed* to have a more *intimate* Acquaintance with *one anothers* Natures. And if we will be guided by these, we shall find the *whole* World of *Spirits*, even from the *highest* to the *lowest*, unanimously *rating* the Souls of Men at an *inestimable* Price and Value. And to make this appear, I shall shew you the *vast* Price there is set upon them.

1. By GOD the FATHER.
2. By GOD the SON.
3. By GOD the HOLY GHOST.
4. By the HOLY ANGELS.
5. By the DEVILS.

1. Let us consider the *vast* Price which God the Father hath set upon Souls. For when he intended to form these *noble* Beings, and transmit them into *terrestrial* Bodies, that so being compounded with a *sensitive* Nature, they might
clasp

clasp the *Spiritual* and *Animal* Worlds together; he being sensible of the *vast* Hazards and *infinite* Snares they would be *exposed* too, was so deeply concerned for their Preservation, that he thought nothing *too dear* to save and secure them. And *fore seeing* their Fall from that *terrestrial* Happiness which he *originally* designed them, notwithstanding the *liberal* Care he had taken to preserve them in the *State of Innocence*, he designed to remove the *Scene* of their Happiness from *Earth* to *Heaven*; being resolved, if possible, to repair the Loss of a *terrestrial* with a *celestial* Paradise. For which end, instead of the *Covenant of Innocence*, the *Blessings* whereof by their *Sin* they had *for ever* forfeited, he introduces the *Covenant of Repentance*, that so by the help of this Plank, after their *general* Shipwreck, they might be preserved, and go safe to the *Shore* of a *happy* Eternity. And that by this *Covenant*, he might the more effectually recover them, he designed to grant it to them in such a Way, and upon such a *wise* and *weighty* Consideration, as might at once affect them with the *greatest* Sense of his *Love*, and the *deepest* Awe of his *Severity*; that so whilst by the *former* he *allured*, by the *latter* he might *terrify* to Repentance: To which *end*, he determined not to grant it to them, upon any *other* Consideration than that of *another* suffering for them, and *undergoing* the Punishment of their *Sin*, in their stead; that so whilst he shewed his *Love* to them, in admitting *another* to suffer for them, he might express his *Hatred* to their *Sin*, in not Pardoning it without another's suffering. And that he might manifest *this* his *Love* to them, and *this* his *Hatred* to their *Sin*, in the *highest* Degree, as he admitted *another* to suffer for us; so he resolved to accept no *meaner* Suffering than that of his *own beloved* Son. And that *this* his *suffering* might be the more *effectual*, he *proposed* to send him down to us, into this *lower* World, *cloathed* in our *Natures*, that so he might, not only the more familiarly *instruct* us by his *Doctrine* and *Example*, but the more exactly *personate* us in *undergoing* the Punishment of our *Sin*; and upon his undertaking to undergo it, the most *Merciful* Father agreed to this *Covenant of Mercy*, by which he obliged himself to receive us into his Favour upon our *unfeigned* Repentance; and *impower'd* his Son to govern us, according to the Tenour of it, that is, to *crown* us with the *Rewards* of it, if we repented, and *inflict* on us the *Punishments* of it, if we went on in our *Impenitence*. And that there might be nothing wanting to render this Government of his Son *successful*, and us *obedient* to it, he also agreed upon *this* his *mighty* Undertaking, to *substitute* to him the *Holy Ghost*, to be the *supreme* Minister of his Government, that so by the *Agency* of this *vicarious* Power, he might *bow* and *incline* the Hearts of Men to submit unto him, and comply with the Terms of this *Merciful* Covenant, in which their *everlasting* Welfare is so abundantly provided for.

This is the *mighty* Project, which, for the sake of the Souls of Men, the Father of *Spirits* hath contrived, and upon which he hath acted and proceeded, even from their *first* Fall, to this very *Moment*: And by this he hath most plainly *expressed* the *high* and great Veneration that he hath of them; for doubtless, had they not been exceeding *precious* in his Eyes, he would never have thought it worth the while to project and act such *mighty* Things to redeem and save them. He would rather have left them to their *own* Fate, and not have concerned himself about them, or not have concerned himself to that Degree, as to make them the *Subjects* of such a *vast* Design. For all *wise* Agents measure their Designs by the *Worth* and *Value* of the Things they aim at, and do never lay *great* Projects for the sake of *little* Trifles; and unless God had a *mighty* Value for the Souls of Men, his making such *vast* Preparations to save them, would be like that *foolish* Emperor's raising a *numerous* Army, only to go and gather Cockle-shells.

2. Let us consider the *vast* Price which God the *Son* hath set upon Souls; For it is plain he valued them at that *mighty* Rate, as that for their sakes he willingly undertook to execute this *vast* Design of his *Father*, and that to save these *precious* Beings he thought it would be very well worth his while to come down from *Heaven* and *vail* his *Divinity* in our *Natures*, to put on the *Form* of a *Servant*, and make himself of no Reputation; to *live* a *Miserable* Life, and *die* a

painful

painful and accursed Death. And can we *think* he would ever have laid down so *vast* a Price, as his *Glory* and *Happiness*, his *Life* and *Blood* amounts to for Things of a *mean* and *inconsiderable* Value? Had he so *low* an Esteem of his Father's Bosom, and his own *Heavenly* Glory, as to *part* with them for *Trifles*? Such *slight* Apprehensions of *Shame* and *Sorrow*, *Pain* and *Misery*, as to cast himself into them for the sake of *Beings* he had *little* or *no* Esteem of? Could any thing but what is *inestimable* countervail to that *Glory* he *parted* with, and that *Misery* he endured? Or, Can you think those Souls of *little* Worth, which the *Son of God* thought *worth* his dying for? No certainly, if we knew nothing of our Souls but this, that the *Son of God* thought them a *good* Purchase at the *dear* Price of his *Bliss*, his *Glory*, and his *Blood*; yet from thence we have *infinite* Reason to conclude them most *precious* and *inestimable* Beings, it being *impossible* that he who doth so perfectly understand the *Worth* and *Value* of Things, should ever be so *over seen* as to *pay* so *vast* a Sum for *slight* and cheap Commodities.

3. Let us consider the *vast* Price which *God the Holy Ghost* hath set upon Souls; For 'tis for their sakes that he doth so *Industriously* operate in the Kingdom of our *Saviour*, that he takes so much Pains in it, as he doth and hath always done, ever since it was *first* erected, to drive on that *blessed* Design of making the Souls of Men, *the native Subjects* of it happy. It is upon their Account that he hath made so *many* Revelations of God's Will to the World, and confirmed them by so *many* Miracles, that so he might extricate those *precious* Beings out of those Labyrinths of Error in which they had involved and lost themselves, and direct them into the way to *true* Happiness. And it is for their good that he still continues shedding forth his *Heavenly* Influences upon them, that he still inspires them with so many *good* Thoughts, importunes them with such *urgent* Motives, presses upon them with such *earnest* Strugglings and *vigorous* Efforts, not only of his *preventing* but of his *assisting* Grace too, that if *possible* he may awaken them into a Sense of their Danger, and excite and quicken them to pursue the Methods of their *own* Safety and Happiness. So infinitely *jealous* is this *blessed Spirit* lest these *precious* Beings should Miscarry, that tho' one would think them sufficiently *safe-guarded* in their Voyage through this *dangerous* Sea under the Convoy of their *own* Reason, yet he dares not trust them to themselves, but bears them Company all along, and keeps a watchful Eye over them, and when any Rock is nigh he warns them of it, and when they are beset with *evil* Spirits, those *mischievous* Pirates that lie in wait to Captivate and *Inslave* them, he presently comes in to their Assistance; and, unless they are resolved to betray themselves, always brings them off victoriously. Nay, tho' they many times not only yield to these *Piratical* Spirits, but join their Forces with them to resist and beat off their *merciful* Friend and Deliverer, yet he doth not therefore presently abandon them, but being infinitely concerned for their Rescue, follows them even to the Mouth of the Enemies Harbour with his *blessed* Motions and Importunities, and never gives over the Pursuit of them till he hath either actually recovered, or left them past all Hopes of Redemption. And when he sees that they are utterly lost by their *own* Madness and Folly, and that it is in vain to follow them any farther, he casts a *sorrowful* Look upon them, and like a *grieved* Friend after the *utmost* strugglings and *extream* Efforts of his *affronted* Goodness, unwillingly leaves them to their own *sad* Fate, and gives them up as it were with the Tears in his Eyes. And can you think this *blessed Spirit* would be so *industrious* as he is in his Ministry for Souls, that he would take such *infinite* Pains to save them, be so *extreamly* *urgent* and *solicitous* for their Welfare, if he did not know them to be a sort of Beings of an *inestimable* Worth and Value? O *Blessed* God! What are not our Souls *worth*, that are worth all the Pains thy *blessed Spirit* takes to save, and make them *happy*? That not only *thou* thoughtst it *worth* all those *vast* Thoughts and Counsels, which thou hast spent upon them; that not only thy *Son* thought *worth* all those *vast* Condescensions he stooped to, to put those Thoughts in Execution; but thy *blessed Spirit* also thinks *worth* all that *unwearied* Pains and Endeavour,

Endeavour, all that *incessant* Care and Importunity which he employs about them to save and rescue them from Sin and Misery? Doubtless those Beings must needs be exceeding *precious*, for whose Safety and Welfare all the *blessed Trinity* are so unspeakably concerned.

4. Let us consider the *vast* Price which the *Holy Angels* put upon Souls. For tho' they are the Crown and Top of all the Creation of *God*, and do by their *essential* Perfections border *nearest* upon him; yet such is their Opinion of the Souls of Men, that they think it no Disparagement to converse with, and minister to them; but from the Beginning of the World, till now, have been always ready to maintain a *close* Intercourse and *intimate* Correspondence with them; and so far forth as they are permitted by the Laws of their *invisible* World, they are continually attending to *stretch* forth a *helping* Hand to them in all their Needs and Necessities. Tho' they are the most *Illustrious* Courtiers of *Heaven*, yet they disdain not to be the *Life-Guards* of Souls; to *pitch* their *Tents* round about them, as the *Psalmist* expresses it, *Psal.* 34. 8. And interpose between them and their Danger; to prompt them *to*, and assist them *in* their Duties; to strengthen them against, or to remove their Temptations; to comfort them in their Sorrows, and chase away from them those *malignant Spirits*, that are always about them watching all Opportunities to seduce and destroy them. Hence *Heb.* 1. 14. They are said to be *ministering Spirits* sent forth to minister for them, who shall be *Heirs of Salvation*. And how much they are concerned for the Safety and Welfare of these *precious* Beings, they are charged with, is evident by that Passage, *Luke* 15. 16. *There is joy in the presence of the Angels of God, over one Sinner that repenteth.* So *Considerable* are the Lives of Souls to the *Angels of God*, that though they are always entertained with the most *ravishing* Pleasures, yet *Heaven* it self cannot divert them from being overjoyed at the Repentance of a *Perishing* Soul, and celebrating its Recovery with a *new* Festival. And when-ever the *happy* News is brought them, that such a *dying* Soul is revived, they not only attend to it in the *midst* of all their Joys and Triumphs, but upon the hearing of it, they shout for Joy, and fill the Heavens with a *new* Acclamation. And whenever such a *Penitent* Soul hath bidden adieu to the Body, those *blessed* Spirits stand ready to receive and guard it through those *Legions of malignant Spirits* that do always infest these *lower* Tracts of Air, and to conduct it safe to those *happy* Abodes where it is to lodge till the Resurrection; for it is said of *Lazarus's* Soul, *Luke* 16. 22. *That it was carried by Angels into Abraham's Bosom:* All which is a *clear* Demonstration of the *vast* Esteem which those *Blessed Angels* have of Souls. For can it be thought that such *noble* Beings who have a *God* and themselves to converse with, and have so *immediate* a Prospect both of *his* Beauty, and their *own*, to exercise their Faculties, and employ their Contemplation, would be so *ready*, and *willing*, as they are, to attend upon Souls, and minister to their Safety and Happiness, if they had not a *mighty* Value and Estimation of them? Surely if these *immortal* Spirits within us were not unspeakably *dear* and *precious*, those *Angelical* Beings, who have always the most *sublime* and *enraving* Objects before them, to employ and entertain their Faculties, would never have thought it *worth the while* to stickle so zealously in their Affairs, and concern themselves so much about them: And thus our *Saviour* himself argues, *Mat.* 18. 10. *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in Heaven their Angels do behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven;* that is, do not undervalue any Soul; for how *mean* or *little* soever some of them may appear to you, they are under the *Guardianship* of those *Blessed Angels* that are the Courtiers of *God*, and do always attend upon his *Majestick* Presence.

5. And *Lastly*, Let us consider the *vast* Price which the *Devils* themselves do put upon Souls. For ever since those *malignant* Spirits through their *own* Pride and Ambition revolted from *God*, and conspired to make War with *Heaven*, and revenge their Expulsion thence, the *constant* Drift of all their Designs and Actions hath been to seduce and ruine them; being conscious, that of all the Beings that are within the reach of their Power, there are none so *dear* to *God* as these; and

that by seducing from him these his most *precious* Creatures, they shall do him the *greatest* Spight, and most effectually Revenge upon him their *own* Damnation. For doubtless, were there any Beings below the Moon, more *dear* to God than these, they would bend their Force and Malice against them, and not make these as they do, the *only* Centers of their *mischievous* Activity. Had they any *nobler* Game to fly at, their *ambitious* Malice would disdain to stoop to the Quarry of Souls; but because of all others, These are the *noblest* and best *worth* the ruining, therefore do these *malignant* Spirits turn all their Artillery upon them, and level all their *fiery* Darts against them. And how *ambitious* they are of seducing our Souls, and training them on to Perdition, is evident by the *infinite* Wiles, and Snares, and Stratagems they contrive against them; by their *unwearied* Diligence to watch all Opportunities against them; to surprize them where they are *careless*, and assault them where they are *weakest*, and cheat them with *disguised* Suggestions; to inspect their Humours, and apply themselves to their Interest, and nick their Tempers, with convenient *Temptations*. And if after all their Labour, Craft, and Contrivance, they can but seize the Game they hunt for, the Blood of a Soul is so *rich* a Draught, that they think it a *sufficient* Recompence for all their *painful* and *mischievous* Devices: For St. Peter tells us, That *they go about like roaring Lions, seeking whom they may devour*. And to be sure, those *malignant* Spirits would never be so impertinently *mischievous*, as to spend their time in catching Flies; and did they not know our Souls to be *noble* Preys, they would never go so far about as they do, nor take so much Care and Pains to catch and insnare them. So that from their *unwearied* Diligence to seduce and ruin us, we may most certainly conclude, either that they are very *foolish* Devils, or that our Souls are very *precious* Beings; but howsoever, their Diligence to destroy them, is a *plain* Argument that they esteem them *precious*, it being by no means to be supposed, that such *Wise* and *Intelligent* Beings as they are, would so much concern themselves, as they do, about things which they had *little*, or *no* Esteem for.

And thus you see at what a *vast* Rate our Souls are valued by the whole World of Spirits: How from the *highest* to the *lowest*, those *best* and *wisest* Judges of the *just* Worth of Souls, do all unanimously concur in a *great* and *high* Estimation. So that whether we value them by their own *natural* Capacities, or by the Estimation of those who are best able to judge of their Worth and Excellency, we have *abundant* Reason to conclude them most *precious* and *inestimable* Beings. And now I shall conclude this Argument with some Inferences.

1. From hence I infer, by what it is that we ought to value our selves, and estimate the Dignity of *our own* Natures, *viz.* by our *rational* and *immortal* Souls, those *excellent* Beings that are so *invaluable* in themselves, and so highly esteemed by the *best* and *wisest* Judges. 'Tis this *intelligent* and *immortal* Nature within us, that is the Crown and Flower of our Beings; 'tis by this that we are exalted above the Level of meer *Animals*; by this that we are allyed to Angels, and do border upon God himself: And he that values himself by any thing but his Soul, and those things which are its *proper* Graces and Ornaments, begins at the *wrong* End of himself, forgets his Jewels, and estimates his Estate by his Lumber. And yet, *good God*, What *foolish* Measures do the Generality of Men take of themselves? Were we not forced by *too* many *woful* Experiments, it would be hard to imagine that any Creature that believes a *rational* and *immortal* Soul to be a Part of its Nature, should be so *ridiculous* as to value it self, by the *little trifling* Advantages of a *well-coloured* Skin, a Suit of fine Cloaths, a Puff of popular Applause, or a few Bags of *white* and *red* Earth; and yet, *God help* us, these are the only things almost by which we value and difference our selves from others. You are a much better Man than your Neighbour; he, alas, is a *poor contemptible* Wretch, a *little*, *creeping*, *despicable* Thing, not worthy to be looked upon, or taken notice of by such a one as you. Why in the Name of God, what is the Matter? Where is this mighty Difference between
you

you and him? Hath not he a Soul as well as you? A Soul that is *capable* to live as long, and to be as *happy* as yours? Yes, yes, 'tis true indeed; but notwithstanding, God be thanked, you are another-guess Man than he; for you have a much *handsomer* Body, your Apparel is much more *fine* and *fashionable*, you live in a more *splendid* Equipage, and have a *larger* Furlie to maintain it, and your Name *forsooth*, is more in Vogue, and makes a far *greater* Noise in the World. And is this all the Difference between your *mighty* selves and your *pitiful* Neighbours? Alas poor Men! A few Days more will put an End to this, and when your rich Attires are reduced to a *Winding-sheet*, and all your *vast* Possessions to *six Foot of Earth*, What will become of all those little Trifles by which you value your selves? Where will be the *Beauty* or *Wealth*, the *Port* or *Garb*, which you are now so *proud* of? Alas! Now that *lovely* Body looks as *pale* and *ghastly*, that *lofty* Soul is left as bare, as poor and naked as your despised Neighbours. Should you now meet his *wandering Ghost* in the *wide* World of Spirits, What would you have to boast of more than he, now your *Beauty* is withered, your *Wealth* vanished, and all your *outward* Pomp and Splendor shrouded in the *Horrors* of a *silent* Grave? Now you will have nothing to distinguish you from the most *Contemptible*, unless you have *wiser* and *better* Souls, and by so much as you were more *respected* for your *Beauty* and *Wealth*, your *Garb* and *Equipage* in this World, by so much will you be more *despised* for your *Pride* and *Insolence*, your *Covetousness* and *Sensuality* in the other. Let us therefore learn to value our selves by that which will abide by us, by our *immortal* Souls, and by those *heavenly* Graces which do *adorn* and *accomplish* them; by our *Humility* and *Devotion*, by our *Charity* and *Meekness*, by our *Temperance* and *Justice*; all which are such *Prebeminences*, as will survive our Funerals, and distinguish us from *base* and *abject* Souls for ever. But for a *rational* and *immortal* Creature to *prize* it self by any such *temporary* Advantages, is altogether as vain and ridiculous, as it was for the Emperor *Nero* to value himself for being an *excellent* Fidler.

2ly, From hence also I infer, how much we are obliged to live up to the Dignity of our Natures. Should a *stranger* to Mankind be admitted into this *busy* Stage of *humane* Affairs, to survey our Actions, and the *paultry* Designs we drive at, certainly he would hardly imagine that we believed our selves, to be such a noble sort and strain of Beings as we are. If you saw a Man seriously imploying himself in some *sordid* and *beggary* Drudgery, Could you imagine that he believed himself to be the Son of a King, and the Heir of a Crown? And when it is so *apparent*, that the *main* of our Design is to prog for our *Flesh*, and make a *comfortable* Provision for a few Years Ease and Luxury, Who would think that we believed our selves to be *immortal* Spirits, that must live *for ever*, in an *inconceivable* Happiness or Misery? When we consider the high Rank which we hold in the Creation, the *vast* Capacities which there are in our Natures, and the *noble* Ends which we were made and designed for, Are we not ashamed to think how *poorly* we prostitute our selves, and vilify *our own* Faculties by the *sordid* Drudgeries wherein we exercise and imploy 'em? When we think what a Reputation we have throughout all the World of Spirits, what a *vast* Rate we are valued at by *God*, and *Angels*, and *Devils*, Are we not confounded to think how we *under-value* our selves by those *low* and *inglorious* Ends, which we pursue and aim at? O good *God*, that thou should'st give me a Soul of an *immortal* Nature, a Soul that is *big* enough for all the Joys which thy *everlasting* Heaven is composed of, And I be such a Wretch to my self, such a Traytor to the Dignity of my *own* Nature, as to give up my self and all my Faculties to the Pursuit of such *vain* and *wretched* Trifles? That I who am akin to *Angels*, should make my self a *Muck-worm*, and chuse *Nebuchadnezzar's* Fate to leave Crowns and Scepters, and live among the *savage* Herds of the Wilderness? That having such a *great* and *noble* Nature, I should content my self to live like a Beast, and aim no *higher* than if I had been born only to eat, and drink, and sleep, and wake for *thirty* or *forty* Years together, and then retire into a *silent* Grave, and be *insensible* for ever? Wherefore in the Name of *God*, let us at last remember what we

are, and what we are born to. Let us consider, that we have Faculties that are *capable* of exerting themselves *for ever*, in the most *inravishing* Contemplation, and Love of the *eternal* Fountain of Truth and Goodness; of Copying and Transcribing his most *adorable* Perfections, his *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, *Purity* and *Justice*, from whence the *infinite* Happiness of his Nature derives; and thereby of glorifying us into *living* Images of *God*, and rendering us *like* him both in Beauty and Happiness. In a word, that we have Faculties to converse with Angels and with blessed Spirits, to bear a part in the *eternal* Comfort of their Joys and Praises, and to relish all those *unknown* Delights of which their *everlasting* Heaven doth consist. And having such *great* and *noble* Powers in us, Is it not a *burning* shame that they should be always condemned to an *endless* Pursuit of Shadows and Impertinencies? Let us therefore rouse up our selves, and shake off this *sordid* and *degenerate* Temper that sinks and depresses us, and makes us act so infinitely *unbecoming* the Dignity of our *immortal* Natures. And since we are descended from, and designed for the *Heavenly Family*, let us learn to demean our selves upon Earth, as becomes the Natives of *Heaven*. Let us disdain all *base* and *sordid*, all *low* and *unworthy* Ends of Action, as Things beneath our *illustrious* Rank and Station in the World of Beings, and live in a *continual* Tendency towards, and Preparation for that *Heavenly State* which is the *proper* Orb and Sphere of our Natures.

3/y, From hence also I infer, how much they undervalue themselves, that sell their Souls for the Trifles of this World. For since we know before-hand, that the Wrath of God is revealed from *Heaven* against all Unrighteousness and Ungodliness of Men, and he hath plainly assured us that our Souls must smart *for ever* for our Sins; it necessarily follows, that whenever we knowingly suffer our selves to be enticed into Sin, we make a *wilful* Forfeiture of our Souls. He that knows that such a Draught, however *sweetned* and made *palatable*, is yet compounded with the Juice of *deadly Nightshade*, and notwithstanding that, will have the *poisonous* Draught, is willfully bent to Murder and Destroy himself.

And when we see that the Pleasure of our Sin draws after it the Ruin of our Souls, and yet will Sin notwithstanding; we do in effect stake our Souls against it, and with our Eyes open, make this *desperate* Bargain; That upon Condition we may enjoy such a *sinful* Pleasure, we will willingly surrender up our *immortal* Spirits to the Pains of an *endless* and *intolerable* Damnation. And if so, O *blessed God*, How do the Generality of Men depreciate and undervalue themselves? For, How often do we see Men in their *little* Frauds and Cozenages, sell their Souls for a Penny gain; in their *lascivious* and *intemperate* Humours, barter their Souls for a Moments Mirth or Pleasure? In their *ambitious* Projects and Designs, part with their Souls for a Blast of *vulgar* Breath and *popular* Noise. For in every Temptation to Sin, the Devil cheapens our *immortal* Souls; bids so much *Pleasure*, or so much *Profit* for them; and in every Compliance with the Temptation, we take his Offer, and strike the *fatal* Bargain: So that if we will Sin, we had need Sin for something, since we must pay so dearly for it. But alas! There is no Proffer the Devil can make us, that is a *tolerable* Price for the Blood of our Souls. Though he should offer us the *whole* World for it, our *Saviour* assures us that he would bid us infinitely to our Loss: And if so, What *wretched* Sales do we make of our Souls, when we Sin for Trifles, *lie* and *cheat* to get a Penny, consent to a *wicked* Motion for a Pleasure, that will wither while we are smelling to it, and expire in the very Injoyment? For so much we value our Souls at, and do in effect declare, That in our Esteem these *precious* Beings, which *God* and *Angels* set so high a Price on, are worth no more than what that *Profit* or *Pleasure*, for which we Sin, amounts to. O *good God*! What *cheap* and *worthless* Things then are our Souls in our Esteem, who sell and barter them every Day for such *mean* and *worthless* Trifles? How do we part with our *Gold* for *Dross*, and exchange our *Jewels* for *Pebbles*? What *sordid* Thoughts, what *wretched vile* Opinions have we of our selves, that are so ready upon all Occasions to sell our selves for nought, or which is next to nought, for the *for-*

ry Proffers of every *base* and *infamous* Lust? O would to God we would at last make but a *just* Estimate of our selves, and thereupon resolve, as it is most *reasonable* we should, never to comply with any *sinful* Motion, till we can get more by it than our Souls are worth, and then I am sure we should be *for ever* Deaf to all the Proffers which the *Devil* or *World* can make us.

4ly, And *Lastly*, From hence also I infer, How much we are obliged above all things to take Care of our Souls. For since they are Beings of such vast Capacities in themselves, and of such an *high* Estimation in the World of Spirits, methinks we should all be convinced that to take leave of their Welfare, and prevent their *everlasting* Miscarriage, is the *highest* Concern and Interest of a Man. And yet, God forgive us, if we consult the *common* Practice of Mankind, we shall find that there is scarce any thing in which we have any Interest at all, that is more *slighted* and *disregarded* by us. Our Body is the Darling that hath our Hearts, and takes up all our Care and Thoughts; and to entertain its Appetite, and accommodate it with Pleasures and Conveniencies, there is no Expence either of Labour or Time grudged, or thought much of; but as for the Soul, that *precious* and *immortal* Thing, which will be living and perceiving *unspeakable* Pleasures or Pains when this Body is *dead* and *insensible*, that is overlooked as a Thing not *worthy* our *serious* Notice or Regard. And though we cannot but be *sensible* how much it is diseased in all its Faculties, how much its *Understanding* is *overloaded* with *Error* and *Ignorance*, its *Will* festered with *unreasonable* Malice and Obstinacy, and its *Conscience* oppressed with Loads of Guilt *sufficient* to sink it to the *nethermost* Hell; yet we seem for the Generality to be no more concerned at it, than if its Ruin or Recovery were equally indifferent to us. We can see it perishing before our Eyes, without any Remorse or Compassion; we can pass Day after Day, without making the *least* Offer or Attempt to recover it, without offering up a Prayer for it, or entertaining a *serious* Thought what will become of it *for ever*. O *insensible* Creatures that we are, thus to neglect and abandon the most *precious* Part of our selves! The Part that makes us Men, and by which alone we are *capable* of being *happy* or *miserable* *for ever*. Let me therefore beseech and conjure you, even by all that is *sacred* and *serious*; by every thing that is *dear* and *precious* to you; by your *best* Hopes, and the most *important* Concern of your *everlasting* Fate, to take pity upon your *perishing* Souls: To consider the *amazing* Dangers whereunto you have exposed them, and to consult the Means of their Recovery: To prick and affect your Hearts with the Sense and Consideration of their *impending* Ruin, till you have forced them to cry out *what shall we do to be saved*: To bath their Wounds with the Tears of Repentance, and to pour into them that most *sovereign* Balm of a *serious* Purpose and Resolution of Amendment: To pray earnestly for them, and keep a *continual* Guard about them, and to strive vigorously with those *sinful* Inclinations that threaten to sink and ruin them. And if we will be but *content* to undergo these *necessary* Cares and Pains to secure them, we shall be sure, when they leave these Bodies, to reap the Fruits of all, in the Possession of an *unspeakably happy* and *glorious* Eternity.

II. I proceed now to the Second Proposition, contained in these Words, *That our precious Souls may be lost*. And this our Saviour here plainly supposes, *If he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul*. The Greek Word is ζημιωθή, which properly signifies to receive a Mulf, or to suffer Damage; and therefore it is here opposed to κερδίσει, *if he shall gain*. So that the Word doth not denote the *absolute* Loss or Extinction of the Soul, but its undergoing some *dreadful* Mulf, or suffering some *irreparable* Damage: For as Hierocles hath observed, ὡς οἱ αὐτοὶ ἀθανάτου ὄντα θανάτου μολίως μεταλεχέειν, ἢ τῇ εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἐκβάσει, ἀλλὰ τῇ τοῦ εἶναι ἀποπλῶσει. *Immortal Substances cannot so die as to lose their Being, but so, as to lose their Well-being they may*. And accordingly our Saviour himself calls the Punishment of the Wicked in Hell Fire, destroying them, Mat. x. 28. *Fear not them which kill the Body—but fear him which is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell*. Where by *destroying*, he doth not mean putting a *final* End to their Being, but putting them

them into an *irrecoverable* State of Ill-being; for in this State of Destruction, they still continue to act, to *weep* and *wail*, and *gnash their Teeth*, as *Christ* elsewhere tells us, *Mat. xiii. 42.* which Actions plainly suppose their Continuance in Being, though in a most *wretched* and *deplorable* Ill-being. So that by the Loss of the Soul, here is not meant the Destruction of its Being, but its being exposed to an *irreparable* Damage in the *other* World. And to prove that in this Sense a Soul may be lost, I shall endeavour these two Things.

First, To shew you what Damages the Soul is *liable* to in the *other* World.
Secondly, Upon what Accounts it is *liable* to, and in Danger of them.

I. What Damages the Soul is *liable* to in the *other* World. To which I answer, That there is a *seven-fold* Damage whereunto the Soul of Man may be exposed *hereafter*.

- 1st, It is *liable* to be deprived of the *highest* Happiness it is capable of.
- 2^{ly}, It is *liable* to the most *dreadful* Punishment and Correction of the Father of Spirits.
- 3^{ly}, It is *liable* to the Fury and Violence of Devils, and *other malignant* Spirits.
- 4^{ly}, It is *liable* to be confined to the most *dismal* and *uncomfortable* Abodes.
- 5^{ly}, It is *liable* to the *perpetual* Vexations of its own *cross*, *wild*, and *furios* Passions.
- 6^{ly}, It is *liable* to the *intolerable* Anguish of its own *guilty* Conscience.
- 7^{ly}, It is *liable* to indure all these *dismal* Things *for ever*.

1st, The Soul of Man is *liable* to be deprived of the *highest* Happiness it is capable of. The *highest* Happiness that a Soul is *capable* of, is to enjoy *God*; that is, to *know*, and *love*, and *resemble* him; and to be admitted into the *noble* Society of those *pure*, and *blessed* Spirits that do thus enjoy him; of all which Happiness a Soul may be *for ever* deprived, by its own *vicious* and *depraved* Temper. For besides that by such a Temper, it may provoke the *just* and *holy* God, who hath the Disposal of the Fate of Souls, to deprive it of, and banish it from this Happiness *for ever*; it may thereby also utterly *incapacitate* it self from ever enjoying it: It may promote and raise that Temper to such a Degree of *Aversion* and *Antipathy* to *God*, and *canker* it into such an *inveterate* Enmity to all the Perfections of his Nature, as that at last it may be utterly *incapable* of any such *beatifical* Knowledge of them, as can any ways incline it to love and imitate him: For the *Apostle* tells us, that *the carnal Mind is enmity to God*, *Rom. viii. 7.* From whence it is evident, That in every Degree of Sin, there is a Degree of *Aversion* to *God*, which *Aversion* may be improved into such an *implacable* Malice against him, as that our Knowledge of him, instead of *endearing* him to us, or *engaging* us to imitate him, may only *avert* us from, *provoke*, and *irritate* us against him, and by presenting to us those *immense* Perfections, for which he deserves our *dearest* Love, and *deepest* Adoration, may only fill our Minds with the *greater* Rage and more *invincible* Horror. And when the Soul is arrived to such a Degree of Malignity against *God*, it is as *impossible* for it to enjoy him, as to be *re-created* with Torment, or delighted with the Objects of its own *Antipathies*. And for the same Reason also, it must be *incapable* of enjoying the Society of *blessed* Spirits, because it hath acquired a Temper that is infinitely *repugnant* to their *Heavenly* Genius; so that if such a *prejudiced* Soul should, when it is arrived into *Eternity*, find the Gates of *Heaven* open to receive it, it would doubtless be so offended at every thing that is *Heavenly*, so startled at the Sight of *God*, and the Displays of his hated Perfections, and seized with such a Horror against those *god-like* Beings that dwell there, and are perpetually *contemplating* and *adoring*, *loving* and *imitating* him, that it would fly away of its own accord from that *blissful* Habitation: As Bats and Owls do from the Light of the Day, and rather

chuse

chuse to banish it self into *eternal* Darknes and Despair, than be shut up *for ever* in a *Heaven* so infinitely repugnant to its Nature. And certainly to be thus excommunicated from the *supreme* Happiness of *our* Natures, and be forced to live in *everlasting* Exile from *God* and *blessed* Spirits, and wander about like *wretched* Vagabonds that are chased and driven from all *Hopes* of Contentment, will be *unspeakable* Damage to our Souls.

2ly, The Soul of Man is *liable* to the most *dreadful* Punishment and Correction of the *Father of Spirits*. There is no doubt but *spiritual* Agents can strike as immediately upon Spirits, as *bodily* Agents can upon Bodies; and though we who are Spectators only of *corporeal* Action, cannot discern the Manner how *one* Spirit acts upon *another*; yet there is no Reason to doubt of the thing; and if there be such a *mutual* Communication of Action between them, there is no doubt but they can mutually make *each other* feel each others Pleasures and Displeasures: And if so, then it is only to suppose that the *less powerful* Spirits are subject to the *violent* Impression of the *more powerful* Ones, and consequently, that all *finite* Spirits are liable to the Lash of an *infinite* One; for Why should it be more *difficult* for the Father of our Spirits to correct our Spirits, than it is for the Parents of our Flesh to correct our Flesh? For though our Souls are no more *impressible* with *material* Stripes than Sun-beams are with the Blows of a Hammer, yet are they liable to *horrid* and *dismal* Thoughts, and to be as much pained and aggrieved by them, as our Bodies are by the most *exquisite* Torments. So that if *God* be displeased with us, he can imprint his Wrath upon our Minds in *black* and *ghastly* Thoughts, and cause it perpetually to drop like *burning Sulphur* upon our Souls. He cannot only abandon us to the *furious* Reflections of our own *natural* Consciences, which, as I shall shew you by and by, will be *hereafter* extremely *painful* and *vexations*, but he can also infuse *supernatural* Horrors into us, and pour in such Swarms of *terrible* Thoughts upon us, as will give us no Rest, but sting us perpetually Day and Night, with *inexpressible* Anguish. And of this you have a *woful* Example, in that *miserable* Wretch *Francis Spira*, who, upon that *fearful* Breach he made in his Conscience, by a *cowardly* Renouncing of his *Religion*, was without any Symptoms of a *bodily* Melancholy, immediately seized with such an *inexpressible* Agony of Mind, as amazed his Physicians, *astonished* his Friends, and *struck* Terror into all that conversed with him: For he was so *near* to the Condition of a *damned Ghost*, that he verily believed *Hell* it self was more *tolerable* than those *invisible* Lashes that were continually laid upon his Soul; and therefore wished he were in *Hell*, and would gladly have dispatched himself thither, in hope to find Sanctuary there from those *vengeful* Thoughts which continually preyed upon his Soul. And if in this World our Soul is so *liable* to the Rod of the *Father of Spirits*, we may be sure it will be so in the *other* too, where *God*, if he pleases, can render it an *eternal Hell* to it self, by pouring continually into it *fresh* Floods of *horrible* Thoughts, which being thrust on by an *Almighty* Power, and perpetually urged and repeated on the Mind, must necessarily create in it not only *exquisite*, but *uninterrupted* Torment. And it being in his Power thus to lash our Souls, to be sure when once he is implacably incensed against them, (as he will be *hereafter*, if we do not appease him) he will let loose his Power upon them, and make them feel his *wrathful* Resentments in those *dire* and *frightful* Thoughts, with which he will sting and scourge them *for ever*. And if the Soul carry into *Eternity* with it, those *provoking* Lusts which do here incense *God's* Displeasure against it, it will there have no shelter from the Storm of his Vengeance, which like a Shower of *Fire* and *Brimstone*, will be continually poured down upon it. For while it continues in this Shop of Vanities, it hath a *great* Variety of Objects to divert those *dismal* Thoughts which *God* many times infuses into it; but in the *other* World, all these *diverting* Objects will be removed, and then every *dismal* Thought which *God* lets loose, will seize and fasten upon it, and like *Prometheus's* Vultures, prey on its *wretched* Heart *for ever*.

3ly, The Soul of Man is *liable* to the Fury and Violence of *Devils*, and other *malignant Spirits*. For when ever the Souls of Men do leave their Bodies, they doubtless flock with the Birds of their *own* Feather, and comfort themselves with such *separate* Spirits as are of their *own* Genius and Temper; for besides that Likeness doth naturally *congregate* Beings, and cause them to associate with their *own* Kind, *good* and *bad* Spirits are by the *eternal* Laws of the *other* World distributed in *two separate* Nations, and there live apart from one another, having no *other* Communication, or Intercourse, but what is between *two hostile* Countries, that are continually designing and attempting one against *another*. So that when *wicked* Souls do leave this *terrestrial* Abode, and pass into *Eternity*, they are presently incorporated by the Laws of that *invisible* World, into the Nation of *wicked* Spirits, and confined *for ever* to their most *wretched* Society and Converse; and then How *miserable* must their Condition be, who are damned to such a *hellish* Neighbourhood, and are allowed no *other* Company but Devils and *devilish* Spirits? For since, as I have already shewed you, Spirits can as well act upon *one another* as Bodies, What can be expected when such *malignant* Spirits meet, but that they should be continually snarling among themselves, and baiting and worrying *one another*? When *Wrath* and *Envy*, *Malice* and *Ill-nature*, are the *common* Genius that inspires and acts the *whole* Society, What can their Conversation be, but a *continual* Intercourse of *mutual* Mischiefs and Vexations; especially considering how they have here laid the Foundations of an *eternal* Quarrel against *one another*? For *there* the Companions in Sin will meet, who by their *ill* Counsels, *wicked* Insinuations, and *bad* Examples, did mutually contribute to *each others* Ruin; and when these shall meet in that *woful* State, How will the *tormenting* Sense of those *irreparable* Injuries they have done *each other*, incite them to exercise their *hellish* Fury upon, and play the Devils with *one another*? And when a Company of *waspy* Spirits so implacably incensed against *one another* shall meet, and like so many *Scorpions*, *Snakes* and *Adders*, be shut up together in the *infernal* Dens, How is it *possible* they should forbear *hissing* at, and *stinging*, and *spitting* Venom in *one anothers* Faces. But then, besides the *mutual* Plagues which those *incensed* and *furious* Spirits must needs be supposed to inflict upon *one another*, they will be also nakedly exposed to the *powerful* Malice of the Devils, those *ferce* Executioners of God's *righteous* Vengeance, who, as *we now* find by Experience, have Power to suggest *black* and *horrid* Thoughts, and to torture our Souls with such *dreadful* Imaginations, as are far more *sharp* and *exquisite* than any *bodily* Torment. And if *now* they have such Power over us, when God thinks fit to let them loose, What will they have *hereafter*, when these our *wretched* Spirits shall be wholly abandoned to their Mercy, and they shall have a *free* Scope to exercise their Fury upon us, and glut their *hungry* Malice with our Vexations and Torments? It seems at least a mighty *probable* Notion, that that *horrid* Agony of our *Saviour* in the Garden, which caused him to *sob* and *groan*, and *sweat* as it were *great* Drops of Blood, was only the Effect of those *preternatural* Terrors, which the Devils, with whom he was then in Combat, impressed upon his *innocent* Mind. And if they had so much Power over his *pure* and *mighty* Soul, that was so strongly guarded with the most *perfect* and *unspotted* Virtues, What will they have over ours, when God hath abandoned us to them, and throws us as Preys into their Mouths? With what an *hellish* Rage will they fly upon our *guilty* and *timorous* Souls, in which there is so much *Tinder* for their *injected* Sparks of Horror to take Fire on? When therefore our *guilty* Spirits shall not only be *liable* to the Scourge of God, but Devils and *damned* Ghosts *too* shall have their *full* swing at them, doubtless the *Hell* within them will be far more *intollerable* than any *Hell* of Fire and Brimstone *without* them.

4ly, The Soul of Man is also *liable* to be confined to the most *dismal* and *uncomfortable* Abodes. What or where the Abode of *wicked* Spirits is till the Morn of the Resurrection, is no where expressly determined in the *Holy Scripture*; but since, wheresoever they are, they are doubtless under the Power and Dominion of the Devil, who, as the *Scripture* assures us, is *Prince of the Power of the Air*.

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It is highly *probable*, that their *present* Residence is in these *lower* Regions of the World; that either being chased by those *infernal* Powers, under whose Tyranny they are, they are continually hurrying about in these *inferiour* Tracts of Air; or, which perhaps is more *probable*, That they are imprisoned by those *invisible* Ministers of the *divine* Justice, within the *dark* Abysses, and *under ground* Vaults of the Earth; and not permitted, but upon *special* Occasions, to come abroad into this *upper* Region of Light and Liberty. But wheresoever they are, it is doubtless in some such *horrid* and *dismal* Prison, as is fit only to receive such *vile* and *desperate* Malefactors, and secure them till the *great* Assizes, when they shall be brought forth to receive their Tryal and *final* Judgment: And then being united to their Bodies, and thereby made *liable* to *corporeal* Torments, the *Scripture* expressly affirms, That they shall be shut up in *everlasting* Flames, and be tormented *for ever* in a Lake of Fire and Brimstone; for then the *Lord* himself shall come in Flames of Fire, to render Vengeance to all those that obeyed not his Gospel: And having with those *raging* Flames set every Part of this *lower* World on Fire, he will *re-ascend* with all his Train to the *celestial* Mansions, and leave the *Wicked* weltring *for ever* in this *burning* Vault below: For it is plain, That the *everlasting* Fire to which he will then Sentence them is the Conflagration of the World, which, after the *Just* are raised, and caught up in the Clouds above the Reach of its *aspiring* Flames, shall break forth on every side, and turn all this *Atmosphere* into a Furnace of *inquenchable* Fire, and therein shall those *wicked* Miscreants that would not be reclaimed, be condemned to live *for ever*. For the Judgment being ended, the Judge and all his Retinue shall return, and leave them in the midst of a *burning* World, surrounded with *Smoke* and *Fire*, *Darkness* and *Confusion*; and wrapt in *fierce* and *merciless* Flames, which shall stick close to, and pierce through and through their Bodies, and *for ever* prey upon, but never consume them. And what an *intolerable* Muleet this is, I leave every Man's *natural* Sense to judge.

5ly, The Soul of Man is also *liable* to the *perpetual* Vexations of its own *cross*, *wild*, and *furious* Passions. We have *sufficient* Experience in this Life, how *vexatious* our *cross* and *excessive* Passions are; for when our Passions are divided, and *contrary* Objects have raised *contrary* Desires and Appetites in us, How do they rend and distract our Souls, and cause *perpetual* Mutinies and Tumults within us? But by Reason of those many *sensual* Gratifications, with which we now make a shift to stop the Mouths of those Daughters of the Horse Leech, when they cry out *give, give*; we cannot be so *sensible* of the Trouble and Vexation of them; unless we now subdue and mortify them, we shall be forced to carry them into *Eternity* along with us. For by being *separated* from their Bodies, the Souls of Men are never *separated* from their *prevailing* Tempers, but in their *separated* State, are for the main, of the *same* Disposition as they were *here*: And do retain the *same* Passions and Appetites. 'Tis true, they cannot be supposed to retain their *bodily* Appetites after they have thrown off their Bodies, but when they have wholly *accustomed* themselves in this Life to *fleshy* Pleasures, and have never Experienced *spiritual* Ones, it is impossible but that in the *other* they should be tormented with an *outrageous* Desire of being *imbodied* again; that to being *incapable* of relishing any *other*, they may repeat those *fleshy* Pleasures which heretofore they were accustomed to, and act over the *brutish* Scene anew. And this *vehement* Hankering of these *carnalized* Souls, to return into their *Bodily* State, is perhaps, the only Sensuality that a *separate* Soul is *capable* of; but it is such a Sensuality, as must necessarily render such Souls extremely *miserable*; for in *that* State, it will be like the Hunger of a *starving* Man, that is immured between *two dead* Walls; that is, it will be a *fierce* Desire, without Hope of Satisfaction; a *corroding* Hunger, sharpened with Despair of Food; than which there is nothing more intolerably *grievous* and *tormenting*. For How will it vex the *wretched* Spirit to look back from the Shores of Eternity into this *corporeal* World? And to ruminate thus with it self; O *miserable* Creature that I am! Here am I cast away for ever upon a *strange* and *desolate* Shore, where I must

famish for want of Food, pine away a long Eternity, and wander to and fro, for ever tormented with restless Rage, and hungry unsatisfied Desires; where is not one Pleasure that I can relish, not an Object that I can taste any sweetness in. Who is me! Tender are all my Joys and Comforts, all that is dear and precious to me. O that I might go back again, and be once more restored to the Injoyment of them! But alas! Between me and them, there runs an impassible Gulf, that deprives me of all hope of returning! For thus will the unhappy Soul torment it self, with an outrageous Longing for that which it can never hope to enjoy. But then besides this Appetite of Sensuality, which it will there be vexed with, it will also carry along with it all that Envy and Malice, that Wrath and Impatience, Pride and Insolence which it here contracted; which black and bellish Passions will prove perpetual Furies in its Bosom: For in that wretched State it will not only have Objects always present to excite them, but such Objects too as will excite them all at once to the most outrageous Excesses. For when all at once it shall see others advanced to the greatest Heights of Glory and Happiness, and it self not only rejected, but abandoned to endless Misery; the Sense of this must necessarily irritate all its devilish Passions to the highest Extremities, and cause its Pride to swell, its Envy to burst, and its Wrath to boil into a Diabolical Fury; and What a continual Hell must this create in the Soul, to be perpetually worried with so many black and rabid Passions; to have all its inferiour Parts and Affections, like those of the Monster Scylla, whom the Poets talk of, as so many Dogs, continually barking and snarling at one another, and yet remain unseparable, as being Comparts of the same Substance.

6ly, The Soul of Man is also liable to the intolerable Anguish of its own guilty Conscience. *The Spirit of a Man, says Solomon, can bear his Infirmities, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* Intimating, That of all the Passions which humane Nature is liable to, there are none so grievous as that of a Mind awakened with a Sense of Guilt. And of the Truth of this we have some Experience even in this Life, tho' now we can make a shift either to divert our selves by our sensual Mirth and Jollities, from listening to the Clamours of our guilty Minds, or else to deceive our selves into a groundless Peace, by indulgent and fallacious Principles; but unless we expiate our Guilts here, we shall carry them into Eternity with us, where all those sensual Pleasures, with which we now divert our selves from reflecting on our Actions, will be removed, and all those fallacious Principles, with which we cheat and deceive our selves, will be baffled by a woful Experience. So that then our Soul will be nakedly exposed to the Lash of its own furious Thoughts, and having nothing to guard or defend it self against the cutting Reflections of a guilty Conscience, which being roused up and kept awake by the unintermitting Sense of our Misery, will be always clamouring upon us, and continually torturing our wretched Minds with sharp and vexatious Reflections: And besides, whilst our Soul doth act by bodily Instruments, and work in this Mire of Flesh, it is impossible it should be so nimble and expedite in its Motions, as it will be when it is a naked Spirit. For then its Perceptions will be much clearer, its Convictions more strong and evident, and all its Reflections active as the Lightning, and quick as the Wing of an Angel. So that whereas now the sharpest Stings of our Conscience have an Intermixture of Fancy and Imagination in them, being gross and material Powers do dull and rebate the Edge of them, and render them less pungent and sensible; when we are stripped out of our Flesh, and sent naked into the other World, we shall have no Clog about us, to break or allay those sharp Reflections with which we shall be forced to lash our selves for ever. And then our Conscience will cut to the quick, and sting with a corroding Venom; then will the Remembrance of those Guilts which brought our Miseries upon us, rouse up such a Swarm of Horrors in our Minds, as we shall be able neither to avoid nor endure. For the Sense of our Misery will be every Moment suggesting those Guilts to our Minds that were the Cause of it, and continually upbraiding us with those desperate Follies by which we ran our selves into it; the Consideration of which, will cause us to hate and curse our selves

selves for ever, and to discharge our Fury upon *our own* Heads, which will make our Soul turn Devil to it self, and force it to be its *own* Executioner. For it being now *conscious* to it self, that its Miseries are nothing else but the *rueful* and *pitiless* Deserts of its *own* Folly and Madnefs, it will be continually meditating *horrible* Reflections and singing Satyrs on it self. So that while it is wandering among *wretched* Ghosts through the *dismal* Shades below, it will never cease lashing it self with its *own sharp* and *stinging* Thoughts, till it hath chafed it self into a Fury, and boiled up its *self-condemning* Rage into *everlasting* Madnefs.

7ly, And Lastly, The Soul of Man is also *liable* to endure all these *dismal* things for ever. For that our Souls are naturally *immaterial* and *immortal*, I have already proved; so that if God in his *infinite* Justice shall think fit to sentence *wicked* Souls irrecoverably to all these above-named Miseries, they must by the Constitution of their *own* Natures live in, and undergo them for ever. And that he doth think to pronounce and execute such a Sentence upon them, he himself hath assured us; for so in *Scripture* he hath plainly declared, that their Punishment shall be *everlasting*, Mat. 25. 7. *These*, saith he speaking of the Wicked, *shall go away into everlasting Punishment*: And accordingly the Fire in, and with which they are to be punished, is called *everlasting Fire*, Mat. 25. 41. and that they shall subsist for ever in this Fire, and be *co eternal* with it, is evident by those Passions and Actions that are attributed to them in it; for Rev. 14 11. they are said to *have no rest day nor night* in it, but to be in a *continual unintermitting* Fever, that will necessarily burn and scorch them, and not allow them the *least* Intervals of Ease or Comfort. And in Mat. 13. 42. the *bitter* Anguish which they shall endure in this Fire is described by their *weeping*, and *wailing*, and *gnashing* their Teeth; which Actions are *plain* Indications not only of their subsisting in this *everlasting Fire*, but of the *extream* Horror and Anguish that they shall therein endure. And indeed, when God sentences any *immortal* Being to Misery, its Misery must be supposed to continue as long as it lives, and consequently to continue for ever, since it is to subsist and live for ever. And What a *fearful* Accession is this to all those above-named Miseries? If we were to endure the *softest* and most *gentle* Pain, without any Interval for *thirty*, *forty*, or a *hundred* Years, the Prospect of that which is to come, would render that which is *present* so *intolerable*, that we should quickly grow weary of our Lives, and wish our selves in our Graves. Lord! What shall we then do when we come to languish out a *long Eternity* in the tormenting Agonies of *dann'd* Ghosts? How will it imbitter every *present* Torment to us, to think of that *never-ending* Duration of Torment to come; that after we have consumed *Millions* of *Millions* of Ages on the Rack, we have still an *eternal Hell* behind, and are as far *distant* from the End of our Misery, as we were when it *first* began? O! Now if we could die and be *insensible* for ever! What *welcome* Tidings would it be? How gladly should we receive that *fatal* Blow that could put an End to a *woful* Eternity? But now it will be in vain for us to cry, O Death, Death, have mercy upon us, and dispatch us quickly into an *eternal Grave*! For Death is *deaf* and cannot here, every Moment it stabs and wounds, but *woe is me*! It cannot kill; it strikes and strikes, but cannot strike home, and so is forced to continue as struggling under the Pangs of an *immortal* Death. If there were any Prospect of an End of our Misery, though it were after a *Million* of Ages, this would give some Ease to the *languishing* Sufferer; But *never, never* — O how that *fatal* Word stabs the *wretched* Soul, and rankles its Anguish into *eternal* Desperation! For to be in *extream* Misery, and see no End of it, is the Perfection of Hell, and the *utmost* Possibility of Damnation.

And thus have I endeavoured to represent unto you, the *fearful* Mulets our Souls are *liable* to in the *other* World; which are such, as one would think, were *sufficient* to awaken the most *stupid* and *insensible* Creature.

II. I now pass on to the *second* thing proposed, which was to shew you upon what Accounts it is that our Souls are *liable* to these *dreadful* Things; or what

it is that exposes us to the Danger of them. In general, it is *our own Sin* and Wickedness, which doth not only incense the *holy God* against us, who is of *purser* Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and provoke and urge him to inflict these *endless* Miseries upon us as the *just* Retributions of our *desperate* Folly and Obstinacy; but doth also by its own *natural* Causality prepare us for, and sink us into that *miserable* State: So that if *God* should not damn us, yet *our own* Wickedness would; the Misery of Damnation being *little* else but the Perfection and Consummation of Sin. For the Sting of *eternal* as well as *temporal* Death is Sin, and it is *Goodness* and *Wickedness* that makes *Heaven* and *Hell*, those two *opposite* Hemispheres of the *Invisible* World; and as, if *Goodness* were plucked out of *Heaven*, it would cease to be *Heaven*, and be overcast immediately with the *dismal* Shades of *Hell*; so if *Wickedness* were banished out of *Hell*, it would be *Hell* no longer, but presently clear up into Light and Serenity, and shine forth into a *glorious* *Heaven*: But wheresoever Sin and Wickedness reigns, there is *Hell* and Damnation in its *necessary* Causes. Since therefore in *necessary* Causes, that which is the Cause of the Cause, is also the Cause of the Effect; our *best* way to be resolved what it is that renders us *liable* to these *future* Miseries, will be to enquire what it is that renders us *liable* to fall into a *sinful* Condition at the *present*; for whatsoever renders us *liable* to Sin, must necessarily expose us to the Danger of Misery. Now the Danger of our falling into, and continuing in a State of Sin, proceeds from these *following* Causes.

- 1st, From the *natural* Liberty of our Wills to *Good* and *Evil*.
- 2^{ly}, From the many Temptations to *Evil* among which we are placed.
- 3^{ly}, From the more *close* and *intimate* Access which these Temptations have to us, than the *contrary* Motives to *Goodness*.
- 4^{ly}, From the *great* Correspondence of these Temptations with the *corrupt* Inclinations of our Nature.
- 5^{ly}, From the *unwearied* Diligence, and *great* Subtilty of the Devil to make Use of, and apply these Temptations to us.
- 6^{ly}, From the *plausible* Pretences we are furnished with to *excuse*, and *justify* our Compliance with them.
- 7^{ly}, From the *extream* Difficulty which this our Compliance brings us under, to *reject* and *vanquish* them for the future.

1. We are *liable* to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Misery, from the *natural* Liberty of our Wills to *Good* and *Evil*. If indeed we were necessarily determined to *Good*, our Happiness would be intailed upon our Natures; and it would be as *impossible* for us to be *miserable*, as it is for the Fire to *freeze*, or for the Ice to *burn*; but to be so determined, I am apt to think is not *consistent* with the Condition of a Creature. For to be *good* by a *natural* Necessity, requires an *infallible* Understanding, or a Mind that is infinitely *removed* from all Possibility of being deceived and mistaken; and this no *finite* Mind can be: But How should the Will be in all particulars necessarily determined to what is Right, so long as it is under the Conduct of a *fallible* Mind that hath a *natural* Possibility of misleading it? So that to be *naturally*, *necessarily*, and *essentially* *good*, seems to be an *incommunicable* Prerogative of the *Divine* Nature, according to that of our Saviour, *There is none good save one, and that is God*, Luke 18. 19. For since no Will can be *essentially* *Good*, but that which is guided by an *infallible* Mind; and no Mind can be *essentially* *Infallible*, but that which is *infinite* in Knowledge; it hence necessarily follows, That to be *free* to *Good* and *Evil* is as *natural* to *reasonable* Creatures, as it is to be *finite* in Knowledge and Understanding. 'Tis true, the *greater* Light of Knowledge there is in the Mind, the *less* Freedom to *Evil* there must be in the Will, unless it hath some *antecedent* Biass and Inclination to *Evil*; and consequently the Angels being of far more *intelligent* Natures than we Men, must needs be *naturally* less *free* to *Evil*; but yet that even they are *naturally* *free* to it is evident, for that some of them have actually

actually lapsed into Devils; and if they are so by their Natures, then much more are we by ours, who are so much their Inferiours in the *rational* World. For as we are *finite* Intelligences, we must necessarily have some Degree of Freedom to *Evil* in us, but as we are of the *lowermost* Rank of Intelligences, we must naturally have *greater* Degrees of this Freedom in us, than any *other* Order of *intelligent* Natures: And if this were all, yet this very Condition of our Natures renders us more *liable* to degenerate into an *evil* and *sinful* State, than any *other* kind of *reasonable* Creatures. If we were now in a State of *perfect* Innocence, yet of all *intelligent* Creatures, we should have the greatest Reason to apprehend the Danger of our Fall; because being the *least intelligent*, we have the *greatest* Freedom to *Evil*, and consequently are on that Account in the *greatest* Danger of falling into it. By the very Condition of our Natures, we are of all *rational* Creatures placed *nearest* to the Brinks of the *fatal* Precipice, and therefore have most Reason to apprehend the Danger of falling *headlong* into it. For doubtless among *innocent* Creatures there are none so near the Danger of sinning as those whose Wills are *least* restrain'd from it, and therefore though we were now as *innocent* as the *blessed* Angels are, yet our Condition would be unspeakable more *unsafe*; because by how much we fall short of them in Knowledge and Understanding, by so much we should exceed them in our Freedom to *Evil*, and consequently be so much the more *liable* to it. But this alas is the *least* of our Danger; For

2ly, We are liable to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Misery, from the many Temptations to *Evil* among which we are placed. For this State of Being in which we now are, being intended by *God* for our Tryal and Probation, it was *requisite* in order thereunto, that we should be placed among Difficulties, that we might have *sufficient* Opportunity to exercise our Skill and Courage in *Religion*; for unless we had some such Difficulties to encounter, there could no Proof or Tryal be made of our Virtue. Hence therefore hath *God* placed our *rational* Souls in *mortal* Bodies, which do naturally abound with *brutish* Appetites and Desires, and compassed us round with this World of *sensual* Goods and Evils, which continually importunes and excites them, that so we might have sufficient opportunity to exercise those *humane* Virtues which consist in the Dominion of our *rational* Faculties, over these our *lody* Appetites and Desires; that we might never want occasion to give the most *glorious* Proofs of our *Patience* and *Chastity*, *Temperance* and *Equanimity*, *Meekness* and *Sobriety*; all which are proper to us as Beings made up of *Soul* and *Body*, whence all those *brutish* Appetites arise, in the *good* or *bad* Government whereof consists the Nature of *humane* Virtue and Vice. So that this *present* State of *humane* Life, is intended by *God* for a Field of Combat between *Reason* and *Sense*, between the Law in our Minds, and the Law in our Members; and that the Victory of Reason might, through the Difficulty of it, be render'd more *glorious* and *remarkable*, he hath furnished its *Antagonist*, viz. the *lody* Appetite with various Weapons; with the Temptations of a World of *sensitive* Goods and Evils to assault and oppose it, to try its Metal, and exercise both its *active* and *passive* Virtues; and upon the Success of this Combat, depends the *everlasting* Fate of this Soul. If *Sense* prevail, and lead her finally Captive into Vice and Wickedness, she is lost *for ever*; but if Reason get the Victory, and finally reduce the Desires and Appetites of *Sense* under the Dominion of Virtue, when this *mortal* Life ends, she shall triumph *for ever*, and be translated hence into a *free* and *disintangled* State, where she shall be vexed and inticed no more with the Importunities of *sensual* Lusts and Affections, but to all *Eternity* enjoy the Serenity and Pleasure of a *pure intellectual* Being. This being therefore the *true* State of Affairs, it is too too *obvious* how *liable* the Soul is to miscarry, when it is placed in a Body among so many *brutish* Passions and Appetites, and that Body is placed in a *tempting* World, among so many *sensitive* Goods and Evils that are continually importuning those Appetites to *mutiny* against Reason, and carry us away Captive into Folly and Wickedness. How much Reason have we to look about us, when we are placed in the midst of

so

so many Dangers, and have such *numberless* Snares on every side ready to decoy and entangle us? But this is not all neither; For,

3^{ly}, We are *liable* also to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Misery, from the more *close* and *intimate* Access which these Temptations have to us, than the *contrary* Motives to Goodness. For the *great* Advantage which these Temptations to Vice have over the most *powerful* Motives to Virtue, is this, That they are all of them *present* and *sensible*; for as for those *grand* Motives to Goodness, that are drawn from the Consideration of our *future* State, they propose to our *Hopes* and *Fears*, those Master-Springs of our Motions, such *Goods* and *Evils* as are a *great* way off, and beyond the Prospect of our *bodily* Senses, which makes the Land-skip of them appear exceeding *dim* and *faint* upon the Mind; their Futurity, which is one sort of Distance, causing them like Things afar off to look *confused* and *indistinct*, by reason of which they cannot affect us so powerfully, and draw such *strong* and *lasting* Draughts of themselves upon our Minds: For Goods, like Magnets, have always the *strongest* Attractions when they are *nearest*; but as for those *invisible* Goods of the *other* World, they are at such a Distance from us, that they can hardly reach us who live upon the *remotest* Circumference of the Sphere of their Attraction. And as Distance lessens all Objects to the Eye, and renders them much *smaller* in Appearance than they are in Reality; so the *remote* Futurity of those *eternal* Goods, which the Motives of Virtue do propose, detracts from their *just* Magnitude, and makes them, tho' unspeakably *vast* in themselves, appear exceeding *small* and *inconsiderable* to our *short sighted* Minds. And the same is to be said of those *future* Evils also, which they denounce against us; and besides, being not only *remote*, but *invisible* too, they cannot strike upon our Senses, by which the most *vigorous* Impressions of Things are made upon our Minds; whereas the Temptations of Vice are all *present* and *sensible*, and do so circle us round as soon as we look abroad into the World, that which way soever we turn our Eyes, they are still before us, thrusting themselves into our Minds, and with their *constant* Importunity, stirring and working our Desires. So that whenever these *outward* Goods or Evils do assault us, we lie *bare* and *open* to them, and they continually press so close upon our Senses, that we are not able to avoid their Impressions: When any *outward* Good invites us to a *sinful* Action, it hath the *vast* Advantage of being *present* and *sensible*; by Reason of which it having a more *immediate* Access to our Minds, doth many times prevail before we can rally up a *sufficient* Strength of Considerations against it; and when we set our selves to resist and struggle with it, the *best* of our Weapons is a Company of *thin* and *faint* Notions of Things afar off; Things that we never saw nor felt; which whilst we are recollecting, the Vice we are tempted to, hath its Powers ready to seize upon the Will, which having oftentimes experienced the Pleasures it invites to, is the more easily *seduced* to a *fresh* Compliance. And whilst our Enemies are so *near* us, and our Helps and Succours so far off, we must needs acknowledge our Danger very *great* and *urgent*.

4^{ly}, We are *liable* to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Misery, from the *great* Correspondence of these Temptations with the *corrupt* Inclinations of our Natures. For by Reason of the Nearness and Sensibleness of those *outward* *worldly* Goods, by which we are continually tempted and solicited to Evil, they have the Advantage of preingaging our Affections to them, before we arrive to the Use of our Reason; for in our *tender* Years, these are the only Goods that we can relish; they are these that do *feed*, *cloth*, and *furnish* us in hand with whatsoever our *natural* Appetites do gape for; that are the *sole* Entertainment of our *childish* Fancies, and the *only* Objects our yet *unsledg'd* Thoughts and Desires can reach at; and our Youth being thus intirely inured to them, by that time we are grown up to the Age of Reason, and the Capacities of Virtue and Religion, we have generally contracted such an *excessive* Inclination towards them, and are so strongly bias'd with the Love of them, that whensoever they beckon to us we are ready to follow them through all the *forbidden*

hidden Tracts that lead to *everlasting* Ruin. For our Natures being thus *vitiating*, the Temptations *without* us have a strong Party *within* us, a Party of *traytorous* Inclinations, which upon every Summons solicites us to yield, and surrender up our Virtue and Innocence; and no sooner can any Temptation from *without* give the Alarm, but presently *our own* Lusts are *up* raising a Mutiny *within* us, and with the Heats of our *corrupted* Fancy, do many times so disorder our Understanding, that it cannot rally up its Considerations against them. For before ever our Understanding could be furnished with Considerations, our Hearts were prepossessed with such an *excessive* degree of *ambitious*, *covetous*, and *luxurious* Inclinations, that when afterwards the *Pleasures*, *Profits*, and *Honours without* begin to hold forth their *grateful* Lures to us, and to tempt us away to *Fraud* or *Treachery*, to *Vanity* or *Licentiousness*, those *depraved* Inclinations have gotten such Head *within* us, that they prove most commonly *too strong* for all our Consideration, and with their *impetuous* Current carry us away, and drive us *headlong* down towards *eternal* Ruin; and unless we put forth all the Strength of our Reason and Resolution, and the Grace of God also come *in* to our Aid, it will be *impossible* for us to stem such a *furious* Tide, when it is driven by the Wind of an *outward* Temptation. When therefore *our own* Inclinations do so vigorously conspire with the Temptations *without*, to thrust us on into Sin and Perdition, How can we be *insensible* of the *eminent* Danger we are in of Miscarrying for ever? But,

5thly, We are *liable* also to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *Eternal* Misery, from the *unwearied* Diligence and *great* Subtilty of the Devil to make Use of, and apply these Temptations to us. For that the Devil doth commonly, as an *assistant Genius* to the Corruption of our Natures, excite and provoke Men to Wickedness is very evident from *Scripture*; where he is said to *work in the Children of Disobedience*. Eph. 2. 2. *To fill the Heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Ghost*, Acts 5. 3. *And to take away the Word out of Mens Hearts, lest they should believe and be saved*, Luke 8. 12. All which Expressions do plainly imply that the Devil is a *constant* Agent in the Sins of Men. And being a *spiritual* Agent, he must needs be supposed to have a *nearer* Access to the Soul than any *material* Cause whatsoever. For tho' he be totally debarr'd from all kind of *Intercourse* with the *immediate* Operations of the *reasonable* Soul, and can no more look into the Thoughts than we can into the Bowels of the Earth; yet he can easily get into the Fancy which stands next to that *mysterious* Chamber that is open to no Eye but God's, and make what use he pleases of the *infinite* Images and *Phantasms* that are in it, and dispose, and order, and distinguish them into the Pictures of what Objects he pleases: Just as the Painter doth his *numerous Colours* that lie confusedly before him in their *several* Shells, and continue and repeat those Pictures and Representations as *long* and as *oft* as he pleases. And then considering what the *natural* Use of the Fancy is, both to the *Understanding* and *Will*, how it prompts the *one* with Matter of Invention, and supplies it with Variety of Objects to work on; and draws forth and excites the *other* to chuse or reject those Objects it presents, according as they are pleasing or displeasing; we must needs suppose that the Devil hath a *vast* Advantage of insinuating his *black* Suggestions into the Soul, by having such *free* Access into the Fancy. And accordingly he is said to *put it into the Heart of Judas to betray Christ*, John 13. 2. But then he being not only a *spiritual*, but also an *intellectual* Agent, of a *vast* and *capacious* Understanding by Nature, and particularly improved in the *black* Art of tempting by a *long* Experience of its Wiles and Stratagems, having been a Tempter almost ever since he hath been an Angel; he must needs be supposed to be wonderfully *expert* and *sagacious* in it; that after having had *five Thousand* Years Experience of the Methods of seducing Souls to increase and perfect his *natural* Subtilty, he must by this be fully instructed when and how to apply himself to every Age and Constitution. For this hath been his *sole* Business, wherein he hath been infinitely *intent* and *active*, ever since he became a Devil; and if from a Man, then much more from a Devil of one Business. Good Lord deliver

liver me from a Devil that for *five Thousand Years* hath been continually making Experiments of Temptation, and drawing them into Rules to direct and order his *mischievous* Practice on the Souls of Men. But besides, as the Devil is of a *spiritual* and *intelligent* Nature, so he hath a *vast* Number of his *black Angels* continually roving about the World to seduce and captivate us into Sin and Ruin. And tho' these *malignant* Spirits have no ligament of *natural* Love between them to tie and oblige them to *one another*, yet by that *perfect* Hatred which they all bear to *God* and *Men*, they are united together in an *invincible* League, and go hand in hand with *one another*, in pursuance of their *desperate* Design to involve our *wretched* Souls in the same *eternal* Ruin with themselves; which renders their Force so much the more *formidable*. And when we have so many *spiritual*, *subtle*, and *powerful* Adversaries combining against, and continually wandering to and fro like *roaring Lyons* to devour us, we cannot but apprehend our Danger exceeding *great*; especially considering the *infinite* Temptations from *without*, that this World affords the great Variety of *sensual* Goods and Evils which they have to object to our *carnalized* Minds. For these *mischievous* Spirits, having so *great* Insight into our Tempers, and so *great* a Choice of Objects to suggest to our Fancies, can never be at a Loss how they may nick us with a *convenient* Temptation; and that which gives their Temptations a *vast* Advantage over us, is, that we know not how to distinguish them from the Motions of *our own* Hearts: For could we see the Devil at our Elbows, or hear him whispering at our Ears, every time he insinuates his *wicked* Suggestions into our Minds, we should doubtless reject them with an unspeakable Horror; but because when they are convey'd into us, we know not how to distinguish them from the *natural* Births of *our own* Minds; therefore we do make no scruple to *bug* and *dandle* them in our Thoughts, and entertain them with an *actual* Complacency. And when the Devil can convey his Poyson into us, in such an *invisible* manner, without discovering his Devils Face; when he can thus prompt us behind the Curtain, and so disguise his Whispers, that we can't discern them from the *secret* Lustings of *our own* Hearts; How can we be safe, without great Care and Watchfulness, from the Malice of such a *formidable* Enemy? But,

6ly, We are also *liable* to fall into a *sinful* State, and from thence into *eternal* Misery, from the *plausible* Pretences we are furnished with to excuse and justify our Compliance with them. When by *our own* Folly, and the Devil's Malice, we are actually betrayed into any *wilful* Sin, a *speedy* Repentance would recover us immediately, and heal the Wound as soon as it is made; but instead of that, we have a *thousand plausible* Excuses to paliate and skin it over: But alas! In the mean time it rots inwardly, and is festring apace into an *incurable* Gangrene. For when our Conscience begins to fly in our Faces, we have no *other* Way, but either presently to repent of, or to excuse and cloak our Wickedness; the *latter* of which is usually pitch'd on as being both the most *easy*, and the most *agreeable* with our *corrupt* Inclinations. And indeed, there are so many Coverts which Men have found out for their Lusts to shelter them from the Persecutions of their Consciences, that this Way there are no Men can be long to seek; for either they may blanch them over with an *innocent* Name, and call their Intemperances, *Good-fellowship*, their Knaveries, *ingenious Fetches*; and their Incontinencies, *Tricks of Wit*; or else they may extenuate and mince them into *Peccadillo's*, and smooth over their *grossest* Rebellions with the softer Name of *humane* Failings and Infirmities; or else they may furnish themselves with some shew of Argument to vindicate their Vices, and assert them *lawful*: As some of late have done in the Case of *Fornication* and *Uncleanness*. Or else they may set up for *Philosophical Sinners*, and quote Texts out of their Gospel, the *Leviathan*, against the *eternal* Differences of *Good* and *Evil*. But if their Consciences will not be put off with such *poor* Pretences as these, there are *Religious* Pretences enough in the World to protect and give Countenance to all their Impieties; and they may either fly to the *Romish* Doctrines of *Confession* and *Penance*, of *Venial Sins*, and of *probable Opinions*, with any one of which they may easily reconcile their

their Lusts and Consciences: Or if they chance to have an *Antipathy* to the name of *Roman Catholick*, they may furnish themselves with such Doctrines out of some of our *modern Enthusiasts*, as will be as *favourable* to their Lusts as they need, or wish, or desire; that will consecrate their *irregular Passions* into Signs of *Grace*, and dwindle their *grossest Crimes* into the Sports of God's People; that will exalt a *mechanick Train* of Fancies and Passions into a *sincere Conversion*, and improve an *Hysterical Fit* into a *spiritual Experience*. By these, and such like ways, may Men easily excuse their Vices to their Consciences; and when they are furnished with so many Expedients, whereby to inable themselves to sin on quietly, in How much Danger are they of falling *fast asleep* in the midst of their Guilt, and never waking again till they flame out about their Ears into *everlasting Burnings*? For whereas this Faculty of Conscience was implanted within us by the Author of our Natures, to be a Guard to our Innocence, and a Scourge to our Lusts, the Generality of Men have invented so many Tricks to shift and evade it, that it is become almost totally *useless* to them. And when they have thus disabled their Consciences from defending them against the Importunities of their Lusts, in what *unspeakable Danger* must they be, not only of *falling* into, but *continuing* in them till they have utterly ruined and destroyed them?

7ly, And Lastly, We are also *liable* to fall into a *sinful State*, and from thence into *eternal Misery*, from the *extream Difficulty* which this our Compliance with those Temptations brings us under, to reject and vanquish them for the future. For every *new Compliance* with Temptations to *Evil*, foment and inrages our *evil Inclinations*, and when once these *evil Inclinations* are by our *customary Compliances* educated into *sinful Habits*, it will be *impossible* for us without a *mighty Assistance* of *divine Grace* to vanquish and subdue them. So that as upon the *former Accounts* we are in *extream Danger* of falling into *sinful Courses*, upon this Account we are in no *less Danger* of continuing in them. For by complying with *this Temptation*, I shall very much disable my self from withstanding the *next*; and if I yield to *that too*, the *third* will find me much more *ready and tractable*, and so on, till at last the Temptation grows first *familiar*, and then *natural* to me, and then it will be *hard*, and then *harder*, and then almost *impossible* to reject or deny it. And when Things are reduced to this Issue that my Sin is *naturalized* to me, and grown into an inveterate Habit, *The Lord have mercy upon me!* For now I am in the *Suburbs of Hell*, but one remove from the State of the *Damned*, and am so far gone in a *confirmed State* of Impiety, that I have almost lost my Liberty of returning; and unless I am speedily rescued by some Miracle of Grace, it is *morally impossible* I should ever escape. Thus as we go on from *one Degree* of Wickedness to *another*, we do as it were break down the Bridge behind us, and do what in us lies to disappoint our selves of all Hopes of any *future Retreat*. For every Step *forwards* in our *sinful Progress*, renders our Return more *difficult*; and when once we have proceeded into a Custom and Habit of Sin, we shall find Repentance so *irksome* to us, and so much against the Grain of our Nature, that it is a thousand to one but that the Difficulty of it will utterly dishearten us from attempting it; and so rather than take so much Pains as we must necessarily do in swimming against the *impetuous Stream* of our Natures, we shall tamely yield to it, and suffer our selves to be born down by it into the *dead Sea* of *endless Misery*. When therefore there are so many Causes conspiring together to betray us into *sinful Courses*, and when there are so many Difficulties when once we are *in* to oppose and hinder our Retreat, What *eminent Danger* are we in of falling into, and persevering in Sin to our *everlasting Ruin*? And thus you see how *extreamly liable* we are upon all these Accounts to be *lost for ever*; that is, to plunge our selves into all those *endless Miseries* which the Loss of our Souls implies.

What then remains but that being seriously affected with the Sense of our Danger, we presently awake out of our Security, and with the *deepest Concern* for our *immortal Souls*, cry out with St. Peter's Auditors, *Men and Brethren*,

What shall we do to be saved? Verily when I reflect upon the *strange* Unconcernedness of Men about their *future* Condition, I am tempted to think either that they do not believe that they have an *immortal* Soul in them, or that if they do, they believe it is *impossible* it should *for ever* miscarry. For How is it *conceivable* that Men, who in *other* matters are so *solicitous* when their Interest is at Stake, and exposed to the *least* Hazard, should believe that they have Souls in Danger of perishing *for ever*, and yet take no more Care or Regard of them, but (like the *forgetful* Mother, who, when her House was on Fire, to save her Goods, forgot her Child) lay out all their Thoughts upon the *little* Concerns of this *frail* and *mortal* Life, and in the mean time forget their *precious* Souls, and leave them perishing in the Flames of Perdition? O *stupid* Creature! What art thou made of that canst consider that thou hast an *immortal* Soul, surrounded with so many Dangers of being lost *for ever*, and yet be no more concerned for its Preservation? Methinks if thou hadst any Sense in thee, having a Prospect of such *endless* Miseries before thee, the *remotest* Possibility of falling into them should be enough to startle and awake thee; but when thou art so near the Brink of those Miseries, and hast so many Causes round about thee shoving thee forward, and thrusting thee *headlong* down into them, and yet be no more concerned at it, is such a Prodigy of *senseless* Stupidity, as Heaven and Earth may justly be astonished at. 'Tis true, if the Danger thou art in were such as is *impossible* to be evaded, it would then be the *wisest* Course thou couldst take to concern thy self as *little* as may be about it; but rather to live merrily whilst thou mayst, and not *antedate* thy Misery, by thinking of the *dismal* Futurity. But God be praised this is not our Case, though our Condition be *dangerous*, yet it is far from *desperate*; for if we will use our *honest* Endeavour, and vigorously exert the Faculties of our Nature, we not only may, but shall escape. There are indeed a *great* many Causes of our Danger, a *great* many Enemies concurring to our Ruin, but none of these are able to effect it, unless we our selves joyn hands in the *fatal* Conspiracy: If we will be but *faithful* Friends to our selves, and true to our own *eternal* Interest, it will be beyond the power of all those Causes together to do us any *material* Injury. For *blessed* be the *good* God, those that are for us, are far *greater* and *mightier* than those that are against us; against us we have the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*, the *weakest* of which is, I confess, a *dangerous* and *puissant* Enemy; but for us we have God and *Angels*, and *our own* Reason assisted with the most *invincible* Motives; with *vast* and *glorious* Promises, that stand beckoning to us with Crowns of Immortality in their Hands, to call us *off* from the Pursuit of our Lusts, to the Practice of Virtue and Religion; with *direful* Threatnings, that are continually Alarming and warning us of the *dreadful* Consequents of our Sins; and sundry other such *mighty*, I had almost said *Almighty* Motives, as, if we would seriously attend to, would certainly render our Souls *impregnable* against all the Temptations of Vice. And besides our Reason thus armed and accoutred, we have on our side the *Holy* Angels of God, who are always ready to prompt us to, and assist us in our Duty, and to *second* us in all our *spiritual* Combats against the Enemies of our Souls. And besides all these, we have with us the *Almighty* Spirit of God, who upon our sincere Desires and *honest* Endeavours, is engaged to aid us, and *co-operate* with us in working out our Salvation; whose Grace is abundantly *sufficient* for us, to strengthen us in our Weakness, to support us under our *greatest* Difficulties, and carry us on victoriously through the most *violent* Temptations. And being back't with such *mighty* Auxiliaries, how is it *possible* that we should miscarry, unless we are resolved to betray *our selves*, and give fire to the *fatal* Trains of our Enemies; and if we are so bent there is no Remedy for our Obstinacy, and it is *just* and *fit* we should be left to the *dismal* and *pitiless* Effect of *our own* Folly and Madness. For if when we see our selves in so much Danger, and it is yet in our Power to escape if we please, we will notwithstanding *precipitate* our selves into Ruin; all the World must agree upon an *impartial* Inquisition for the Blood of our Souls, that we *murdered* our selves, that God is *just*, and

and that his Hands are *clean* from any stain of our Blood, and that *our own* Ruin is wholly owing to our own *invincible* Obstinacy.

III. I proceed now to the *Third* Proposition, *That our renouncing of Christ, and his Religion, will most certainly infer the loss of our Souls.* For, as I have shewed you, these Words are urged by our *Saviour* as a Motive to deter his Disciples from forsaking him, as is plain from *Ver. 24, 25.* which necessarily supposes that upon their forsaking him, this Loss would most certainly and inevitably follow. In the Prosecution therefore of this Argument, I shall endeavour these *two* things.

1. To shew you what that forsaking of Christ is, which infers this Loss.

2. Upon what Accounts our thus forsaking him infers it.

1. What that forsaking of *Christ* is, which infers this Loss. To which I answer, there is a *Four-fold forsaking of Christ*, which the *Scripture* takes notice of as *capital* and *damnable* to the Souls of Men.

1st, When we forsake him by a *total* Apostacy.

2^{ly}, When we cowardly *renounce* the Profession of his Doctrine, or any Part of it, notwithstanding we still believe and are convinced of the Truth of it.

3^{ly}, When by *obstinate* Heresy we either add to, or subtract from the Faith of *Christ*.

4^{ly}, When by any *wilful* Course of Disobedience we do virtually *renounce* the Authority of his Laws.

1. We lose and forfeit our Souls, when we forsake Christ by a *total* Apostacy from him. When after we have been Baptized into his Name, and thereby have made a *visible* Profession of our believing his Doctrines, and obeying his Laws, we turn Renagadoes, and cast off our Belief of the *one*, and disown our Obligation to the *other*; we do most justly incur the Loss and Forfeiture of our Souls. For so *strong* and *cogent* is the Evidence of *Christianity*, that it is not to be supposed that any *professed Christian* can be either innocently or excusably seduced into a Disbelief of it: For *Religion* being a Matter of the *vashest* Moment and Concern, he is a Traytor to himself, that either takes up his *Religion* without Examination, or that upon Examination refuses to be swayed by the *strongest* Reason; and I am sure it is *impossible* for any *Christian* to turn *Infidel*, that is but so *honest* to himself, as *first* to examine carefully the Reasons of his Faith, and then to resolve sincerely not to reject it till better Reasons appear to the contrary: But if either through their *wilful* Ignorance of the Evidence of *Christianity*, or *vicious* Prejudice against the Purity of it, they suffer themselves to be seduced into *Apostacy*, they are *false* Traytors to themselves, and as such are justly *liable* to all those *eternal* Damages they expose themselves to. And hence it is said of those that *draw-back*, that is, *apostatize* from *Christianity*, not only that God's Soul shall have *no pleasure in them*, but also that they *draw back to perdition*, Heb. 10. 38, 39 and 2 Pet. 2. 20. It is said of those *Apostates*, that *their latter end is worse than the beginning*; and that it had been better for them not to have known the way of *Righteousness*, than after they have known it, to turn from the *Holy Commandment*; which implies that *Apostates* from *Christianity* do not only forfeit their Souls, but that without Repentance they will be *for ever* forfeited to the most *wretched* Condition, even to the *nethermost* Degree of Perdition.

2^{ly}, We lose our Souls when notwithstanding we do still believe, and are convinced of the Truth of Christ's Doctrine, we do cowardly *renounce* the Profession of it, or any Part of it. For when once we have received the Faith of *Christ*, we are thereby obliged not to renounce the Profession of it whatsoever Hazard it may expose us to. our *blessed Lord* having assured us that if we *deny him before Men*, he will also deny us before his Father which is in Heaven, Mat. 10. 33. And St. Paul also having warned us, that if we *deny Christ*, he will also deny us, 2 Tim. 2. 12. That is, that he will reject and abandon us before God and Angels to *everlasting* Misery and Damnation; for so St. John assures us, Rev. 2. 8. that the *fearful* and *unbelieving*, *i. e.* the *faint-hearted* Cowards that for fear of Persecution renounce the Profession of the Gospel, shall have their part in the lake

which

which burneth with fire and brimstone. Not that in Times of Persecution we are always bound to make an *actual* Profession and Publication of our Faith, to run to the Tribunals of our Persecutors before we are sent for, and accuse our selves of those Doctrines for which we are Persecuted; but whenever we are *apprehended, accused, and examined* by them, either upon Knowledge or Suspicion, we are bound under the Penalty of *forfeiting* our Souls to *own* and *confess* our Faith, and not to deny any Doctrine or Article of it, whatsoever the Consequence may be. For in this Case, to deny our Belief, is not only a *wilful* Lie, which is in it self a *damnable* Crime, but an Act of *High-Treason* against our *Lord and Saviour*; for by renouncing any Doctrine which he hath revealed and committed to us, we do not only betray his Trust, but blaspheme his Veracity; to deny what we believe he hath revealed, being in effect to declare him a Cheat and an Impostor. And having thus incurred the Guilt of so *black* a Treason against our *Saviour*, and wilfully persisting in it, What can we expect the Consequence of it should be, but the *eternal* Loss and Perdition of our Souls?

3ly, We forsake *Christ* to the Loss and Forfeiture of our Souls, when by *obstinate* Heresy we add to, or subtract from that *Heavenly* Doctrine which he hath revealed to us. By *Heresy*, I do not mean barely a *false* Opinion in our *Religion*, whether it be of *greater* or *lesser* Moment; for I doubt not but the same Error may be an *innocent* Mistake in *one* Man, and a *damnable* Heresy in *another*; that in the *one* it may be the Effect of a *weak* Understanding, but in the *other*, of a *perverse* and *obstinate* Will; and when the Understanding misleads the Will it is Weakness, but when the Will misleads the Understanding it is Wickedness. For *simple* Error is only a defect of Understanding, which in a *fallible* Creature is every whit as *inculpable* as Sickness in a *mortal one*; but Heresy is a Fault of the Will, which is the only Subject of Virtue and Vice. When therefore by the *wicked* Prejudice of our *corrupt* Wills against the Purity of *Christianity*, our Understanding is betrayed into *loose* and *erroneous* Principles; when we understand by our *vicious* Affections, and adapt our Opinions to the Interests of our Lusts; when we believe for the sake of any *darling* Vice, and suffer *our own* *factious, covetous, and extravagant* Passions either to tempt us to profess those *erroneous* Opinions which we do not believe, or to prejudice us into a Belief of them; then is our Error no longer to be attributed to the Weakness of our Understanding, but to the Wickedness of our Wills which improves our Error into a *damnable* Heresy. For he would be a *wicked* Man, though he were not an Heretick, that harbours those *sinful* Lusts which betrayed him into Heresy; but by being an Heretick he is much more *wicked*, because now he is *wicked* under a Pretence of Religion, and cloaks his Impieties with the Garments of Righteousness. And What *greater* Prophaneness can any Man be guilty of, than to make his *Religion* a Baud to procure for his Lusts? So that if out of a *vicious* Propension of Will, we obstinately persist in any *Religious* Errors, we are not only guilty of that *wicked* Propension which is of it self *sufficient* to ruin our Souls; but we are also *accountable* for *vitiating* our *Religion* with those *erroneous* Mixtures by which we have rendered it a Shelter and Protection to our Lust. And what the Consequence of this will be St. Jude will inform us, who speaking of *certain* Hereticks, who to gratifie their own *wicked* Inclinations, had *sophisticated* *Christianity* with sundry *black* and *poisonous* Principles, pronounces this *searful* Doom on them; *for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever*, ver. 13.

4ly, And Lastly, We forsake *Christ* to the Loss and Forfeiture of our Souls, when by any *wilful* Course of Disobedience we do virtually renounce the Authority of his Laws. For whilst we continue in any course of *wilful* Sin, we live in an *open* Rebellion to our *Saviour*, and do by our Actions declare that we will not have him to reign over us. And accordingly, Tit. 1. 16. the *abominable* and *disobedient* are said to *deny God in their Works*, even while they profess to *know him*; and what the Fate of such will be, St. Paul hath forewarned us, Rom. 2. 8, 9. *But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness; Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that*

that doth Evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. And the same Apostle speaking of these obstinate Rebels, who live and persist in an open Defiance to our Saviour's Authority, tells us that *they shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the presence of the Lord*, 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9. But before we dismiss this Argument, it will be requisite more particularly to explain what those wilful Courses of Sin are by which they thus renounce him; all which may be reduced to these three Heads. *First*, We renounce the Authority of his Laws, when we sin against him out of wilful Ignorance of them. *Secondly*, When we sin on against him out of wilful Inconsideration of our Obligation to them. *Thirdly*, When we persist in our sin against Knowledge and Consideration.

1. We virtually renounce the Authority of our Saviour, when we sin on against him out of wilful Ignorance of his Laws. For the Laws of our Saviour, in which the great Lines of our Duty are described, are so plain and legible, that no Man can be long excusably ignorant of them. But if our Ignorance proceed either first from a profane and prefligate Mind that is altogether regardless of God, and hath utterly worn off its natural Sense of Religion, and so neither heeds it nor concerns it self about it, but is become quite deaf to all the Means of Instruction; or if it proceed, *Secondly*, From the vicious Prejudice of our Wills, and we industriously set our selves for the sake of some darling Lust, to exclude from our Minds all the Means of Conviction; and either studiously to avoid all thoughts of Religion, that we may sin on without Disturbance, which is the way of those that are openly Profane and Irreligious; or to use all possible Arts to wheedle our Understandings into the Belief of such Principles as are most indulgent to our Lusts, which is the way of Hypocrites and false Pretenders to Religion: If, I say, our Ignorance of Christ's Laws proceeds from either of these Causes, it will no more excuse our falling into Sin, than the want of Light will a Man's falling into a Ditch that shuts his Eyes at Noon, and winks on purpose lest he should see, and escape the Danger that is before him. But then,

2ly, We virtually renounce the Authority of our Saviour, when we sin on against him out of a wilful Inconsideration of our Obligations to obey him. For we being reasonable Creatures, are bound by the very Constitution of our Natures to act considerately, especially in matters of Religion, which are of the greatest Moment and Importance to us; so that if we miscarry herein through wilful Inconsideration, we are every whit as inexcusable as if we had considerately betrayed our selves. Now wilful Inconsideration is either actual or habitual; Actual, is either first, when notwithstanding we have been sufficiently warned by precedent Surprizes, we take no care for the future; for though it cannot be expected we should always keep so strict a Guard upon our selves, as never to be surprized by an Enemy; yet when we have been overtaken, there is all the Reason in the World we should take warning by it, and grow more wary and vigilant for the future; that we should awaken in our Minds such Considerations as are necessary to prevent our being surprized again, which if we do not, our next Surprise will be inexcusable. And if the Sense of the Lapse which was perhaps but an innocent Error, or at most but a Sin of Infirmary, doth not make us more careful of our selves for the future; the next will be a wilful Fall: Or else in the second Place, this actual wilful Inconsideration is, when upon the presenting of any beloved Temptation, we either quench the good Motions of our Minds, and refuse to consider the Evil and Danger of the Sin we are tempted to, lest we should be thereby deterred from committing it; or purposely contrive to baffle our own Consideration by opposing it either with some ungrounded Hope of Impunity, or some fallacious Promise of future Amendment; and if to make way for our Sin, we do either of these ways wilfully drive all good thoughts from our Minds, lest they should disturb and interrupt us in the Enjoyment of it, our Inconsideration is to be resolved into the Wickedness of our Wills, and not into the Weakness and Infirmary of our Natures. And he that will not consider because he will sin, and afterwards extenuate his Sin by his Inconsideration, urges one Sin in excuse for another, and makes that which is his Fault, his Apology. Whosoever therefore

therefore we Sin out of any *actual* and *wilful* Inconsideration, we Sin wilfully, and consequently do thereby virtually renounce the Authority of our *Saviour*; the *final* Event of which, without our Repentance, will be our *everlasting* Ruin and Perdition. But then, besides this *actual*, there is also an *habitual* Inconsideration, which is *wilful*; and that is, when by often stifling the Convictions of our Consciences, we have scared them into a *deep* Insensibility of *Good* and *Evil*, so as that now we Sin on without any Remorse or Reluctancy, and return to our Lusts with the same indifferency as we do to our Beds or our Tables, without either considering what we are doing, or reflecting on what we have done: And this is so far from palliating our Sin, that it is one of the *highest* Aggravations of it. For as it is no excuse that we Sin out of an *evil* Habit, which we voluntarily contracted by *frequent* Acts of Sin; so neither will it at all excuse us that we Sin out of an *habitual* Inconsideration, which we *wilfully* contracted by often refusing to consider. But as *vicious* Habits have a *proper* Evil and Guiltiness in them, *distinct* from those *vicious* Acts that produced them; so *habitual* Inconsideration hath in it a *peculiar* Venom of its own, beyond what was in those *actual* Inconsiderations whereby it was acquired. And accordingly it is described in the *Scripture* as the *worst*, the most *desperate* and *incurable* State of a Sinner: It is called a *reprobate Mind*, Rom. 1. 28, 29. a *scared Conscience*, 1 Tim. 4. 2. a *hard and unrelenting Heart that treasureth up Wrath against the Day of Wrath*, Rom. 2. 5. So that if we go on in Sin without considering, with a Mind habitually *regardless* and *insensible*, we are *hardened* and *inveterate* Rebels, that have not only renounced the Authority of our *Saviour*, but have also forfeited our selves, and that almost irreparably against all his Methods of conquering and subduing us. But then,

3ly, And Lastly, We virtually renounce the Authority of our *Saviour*, when we persist in our Sin against *Knowledge* and *Consideration*. For to Sin on obstinately against *Knowledge* and *Consideration*, argues an *invincible* Malice of Will; for tho' the Condition of the *ignorant* and *inconsiderate* Sinner be very *sad* and *deplorable*, yet there is much more Hope of him, because he hath never yet had the Force and Efficacy of *Knowledge* and *Consideration*, which perhaps, if ever he be brought to Experience, may prove a *successful* Means of his Cure and Reformation. But the *knowing* and *considerate* Sinner hath tryed and conquered the Remedy, hath experimented the only Means of his Cure, and yet it grows *worse* and *worse* under the Application; he knows what his Sin is, and considers the Consequence of it, and yet sins on; which argues a *desperate* Resolution of Will in him thus to run himself upon a *foreseen* Ruin, and leap into *Hell* with his Eyes open. And What Hope is there of dissuading *him* from his Sin, that knows and considers the Arguments against it, and every Day breaks through them all at the Call of every *sinful* Temptation? And as his Condition is most *desperate*, so his Soul is most *guilty* and *criminal*; for every Act of his Sin is an *open* Defiance to the Authority of *God* and his *Saviour*; his Rebellion is *barefaced*, and hath no manner of Pretence wherein to mask or disguise it self; and he knows and owns himself to be in a Rebellion, and yet perseveres in it, which extremely aggravates and enhances the Guilt of it. For the *Sinfulness* and *Immorality* of Actions is to be measured by the Degrees of Will that are in them, and the Degrees of Will in them are *more* or *less* proportionably, as the Nature and Evil of them is *more* or *less* known and considered: Hence is that of St. James 4. 17. *To him that knoweth to do Good, and doth it not, to him it is Sin*. Had he not known the Nature of his Action, the Weakness of his Understanding would have excused the Error of his Will, and render'd it *pardonable* at least, if not altogether *innocent*: But when his Understanding hath discharged its Office, and shewed him the Evil that he ought to avoid, *that* hath fairly acquitted its self, and can stand no longer *chargable* for his Miscarriages: So that now the Man chooseth his own Peril, and if he still choose what he ought to avoid, his Understanding is *clear*, and his Will alone is *culpable*. And when our Rebellion against our *Saviour* is not only *wilful*, but the *wilfulness* of it is so extremely aggravated by our Knowledge

ledge and Consideration, what the Consequence of it will be that *fearful* Passage will assure us, *Luke 12. 47. The Servant that knoweth his Master's Will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many Stripes.* And thus I have endeavoured to represent to you what that forsaking of Christ is, which exposes us to the Hazard of losing our Souls.

II. I proceed in the *next* Place to shew you, upon what Accounts it is that our *forsaking of Christ* infers this *fearful* Loss; of which, I shall briefly give you this *fourfold* Account.

1st, Our thus *forsaking of Christ* infers the Loss of our Souls, as it is a most *inexcusable* Contempt of the *greatest* Mercy.

2^{ly}, As it renders us the most *unsuitable* Objects of Mercy for the future.

3^{ly}, As it is an *open* Violation of the *fixed* and *stated* Condition of Mercy.

4^{ly}, As it is an *utter* Rejection of our *last* Remedy.

I. Our forsaking of Christ by any of the *aforenamed* Instances, infers the *everlasting* Loss of our Souls, as it is a most *inexcusable* Contempt of the *greatest* Mercy. For when the *Son of God* came down from *Heaven*, he brought from thence with him the *largest* Offers of Mercy that *Heaven* it self could make to a *sinful* World; he did not only bring down with him a Grant of *universal* Pardon and Indemnity, under the *Broad Seal of Heaven*, for every Sinner that would lay down his Arms, and return to his Allegiance, together with the most *endearing* Invitations of the *God of Heaven*, to *woo* and *win* us to accept it; but he also brought along with him all that an *everlasting* Heaven means, Crowns of *immortal* Glory and Pleasure to encourage us to, and reward our Acceptance of them. And What greater Mercy could the *God of Heaven* have expressed to us, than to send down his *blessed Son*, not only to tender to us an Indemnity, but also to invite us to accept it with a Promise of Heaven? So that if now we reject him, now he is come to us with such *vast* and *endearing* Proposals, What an *intolerable* slight will it be to the tender Mercies of *God*? When we shall declare by our Actions, that we will not exchange the sordid Pleasures of our Lust, for the Pardon of *Heaven*, for the Favour of *God*, and for all the Hopes of a *glorious* Immortality? How can we expect any *farther* Relief from *God's* Mercy, after we have put such an *intolerable* Affront upon it, by preferring such an *unworthy* Rival before it? When *God* hath laid his Pardon, his Love, and his *Heaven* in our Way, to stop us in our *sinful* Courses, What a *barbarous* Indignity will it be to trample upon them all, and run over them into Hell? With what Face can we hope for any *farther* Kindness from *Heaven*, after we have treated its Kindness with so much Rudeness and Contempt? Certainly for *sinful* Men to reject and run away from their *Saviour*, when he comes to them with so much Kindness, when he courts them with such *astonishing* Expressions of Mercy, is a Provocation *sufficient* to incense an *infinite* Goodness, and turn the tenderest Mercy into an *implacable* Fury. And when *infinite* Love is so infinitely provoked, What less Expiation can it claim and exact, than the *everlasting* Ruin and Perdition of our Souls?

2^{ly}, Our *forsaking of Christ*, infers the *everlasting* Loss of our Souls, as it renders us the most *incapable* Objects of Mercy for the future. For when we are arrived to that Height of Wickedness, as finally to reject *Christ*, and the Mercies of his *Gospel*, there is no farther Mercy that we are *capable* of; if after this *God* should be so *kind* and *indulgent* as to pardon us, alas! What would it signify? For we should still be *wretched* and *miserable* in Despight of his Pardon; and that *wicked* Temper of Mind which made us reject our *Saviour*, would be an *everlasting* Hell to us though it should indemnify us. What will a Pardon avail a Man that is dying of the *Stone* or *Strangury*? He can but die if he be not pardoned, and die he must though he be. And as *little* Advantage it would be to a *wicked* Soul to be pardoned and absolved by *God*, while she hath a Disease within her that preys upon her Vitals, and hastens her to a *certain* Ruin. She could have been but *miserable* in the *future* Life, if she had not been pardoned, and *miserable* she must be if she continues *wicked*, whether she be pardoned or no; there being an *everlasting* Hell in the very Nature of Wickedness, which no out-ward

ward Act of Pardon can quench or extinguish. Nay, if after our rejecting *Christ*, and the Mercies of the *Gospel*, God should not only pardon, but admit us into *Heaven*, and indulge us the *free* Enjoyment of all its Pleasures and Felicities; yet that *vicious* Temper of Mind which finally *seduced* us from our *Saviour*, would render us for ever *incapable* of relishing the Joys of it. Those Rivers of *heavenly* Pleasure would never agree with the *hellish* Temper of our Minds, which, like a *feverish* Tongue, would utterly disgust their *delicious* Streams by Reason of its own *overflowing* Gall. So that after we have finally rejected our Saviour, we are neither *capable* of being indemnified from *Hell*, nor of enjoying *Heaven*; and having cast our selves beyond the Reach of all Mercy, into a State wherein we can neither begin to be *happy*, nor cease to be *miserable*, our Case is *desperate*, and there is no Remedy but our Souls must be lost and undone for ever.

3ly, Our forsaking of *Christ* infers the *everlasting* Loss of our Souls, as it is an *open* Violation of the *fixed* and *stated* Condition of Mercy. The *fixed* and *immoveable* Condition of the Mercy of the *Gospel*, is, That we should constantly adhere to our *Saviour*, by a *true* Faith and a *sincere* Obedience; and that whenever we fall off from him either into Infidelity, or Heresy, or Disobedience, we should remember from whence we are fallen, and return again to him by a *deep* and *serious* Repentance. And indeed this Condition is so *low* and *condescending*, that it was *impossible* for the *wise* God and Governour of the World, to propose his Mercy to us at a *lower* or *easier* Rate; and if God should have asked our Consent upon what Conditions he should propose to us the Mercies of his *Gospel*, this would have been the *utmost* Favour that we could in Modesty have craved of him, that he would be so gracious as to accept our *unfeigned* Faith and *sincere* Obedience; and that whenever we fall off either from the *one* or the *other*, he would admit us to Repentance, and receive us again upon our Return and Amendment. And should he have proposed his Mercy to us upon *lower* Terms, he must of Necessity have let go the Reins of his Government, and given us a *free* Toleration for all manner of Wickedness. Had the Condition of his Mercy been but one step *lower* than Repentance, it had totally dissolved the Obligation of his Laws, and reduced the *humane* World into a *perfect* Anarchy. For should he have prostituted his Mercy to *impenitent* Sinners, he must have made it a Refuge for *obstinate* Rebels to fly to, and shelter themselves from the Reach of his Authority; and how *inconsistent* would this have been with the Wisdom of his Government? This therefore being the *lowest* Condition upon which the *wise* and *holy* God can propose his Mercy to us, there is no Ground to hope that after we have rejected *this*, and are finally fallen off from it, he will make any *new* Proposal to us. For he hath yielded as much already to the Weakness and Inconstancy of our Natures, as he could possibly do with safety to his Government; and if this will not suffice, we may depend upon it that he will rather consent to sacrifice our Souls to his *righteous* Vengeance, than his *own* Authority to our *obstinate* Wills. So that when once we have finally rejected our *Saviour*, and shaken hands for ever with Faith and Obedience, and Repentance too, we are quite beyond the Reach of any *wise* Mercy; and then how *deplorable* must our Condition be, when Things are reduced to this *desperate* Issue, That God must either consent to be foolishly *merciful* to us, or to abandon our Souls to *everlasting* Perdition?

4ly, And Lastly, Our forsaking of *Christ* infers the *everlasting* Loss of our Souls, as it is an *utter* Rejection of our *last* Remedy. For the *last* Remedy which God hath prepared for Mankind to heal the Malignity of their Natures, and recover them from *eternal* Misery, is the *meritorious* Death and Sacrifice of his *Blessed* Son, who voluntarily undertaking to be the *Attorney General*, and *Common Representative* of *sinful* Men, suffered Death in our stead as a *vicarious* Mule and Punishment for our Sins; upon which the most *merciful* Father hath granted to all *believing* and *truly penitent* Sinners, a *general* Indemnity from *eternal* Punishments, to which they were bound over by their Sins and Rebellions; by virtue of which Grant as soon as we believe in *Christ*, and do thereupon sincerely Repent of our Sins,

Sins, we are totally absolved from those *everlasting* Punishments whereunto they have exposed and obliged us. And this Sacrifice of *Christ* being the last Remedy which *God* hath provided for our *Guilt*, and the Grant of Pardon *God* hath made in Consideration of it, being confined to *believing* and *penitent* Sinners, it hence necessarily follows, that they who finally persist in *Unbelief* or *Impenitency*, do thereby *for ever* cut themselves off from all Interest in that Sacrifice; and from all Title to that Pardon that is granted upon it, and consequently leave themselves *for ever* destitute of all Hope of Pardon and Indemnity for the future. So that by renouncing *Christ*, we do renounce his Sacrifice, which is the *last* and *only* Remedy we have to depend upon. Hence *Heb.* 10. 26. we are told, that *if we sin wilfully after we have received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sin*; that is, after we have been Baptized, and Initiated into *Christianity*, we relapse into Infidelity or *wilful* Disobedience, we do thereby forfeit our Interest in *Christ's* Sacrifice; and when we have once rejected our Interest in that, there remains no other Sacrifice for Sin, *i. e.* no other Sacrifice upon which *God* will Pardon and Indemnify us. So that now all that remains to us, is that which follows, in the next Verse, *viz.* *A certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries.* For when we have finally baffled our *last* and *utmost* Remedy, the Condition of our Souls must needs be *desperate* and *incurable*. When by our *obstinate* Unbelief, or *final* Impenitence, we have *out-finned* the Virtue of our Saviour's Sacrifice, we are out of the Reach and Compass of *God's* Pardon, and so consequently are sunk beyond all Hopes of Recovery, into *endless* and *irreversible* Damnation. For now that *precious* Blood which, if we had believed and repented, would have spoke *better* things for us than the Blood of *Abel*, will rise in Judgment against us, and, like the Blood of those Souls that are under the Altar, will Charge and Impeach, and be continually imprecating the Vengeance of *Heaven* upon us. And when that which was prepared for the *last* and *utmost* Remedy of our Souls, shall be converted into their Bane; and that which was intended for their Advocate, shall become their Accuser; when that *vocal* Blood, and those *speaking* Wounds, which pleaded for, shall plead against, and cry out instantly for Judgment upon them; What can they henceforth expect but *everlasting* Ruin and Destruction?

What then remains, that since our *forsaking of Christ* will so infallibly infer the Ruin of our Souls, we all return to, and cleave *fast* to our *Saviour* in our Belief and Obedience: That we, who are fallen off from him into a Course of *wilful* Sin and Disobedience, immediately return again by a *deep* and *serious* Repentance. For the Way in which we are walking leads directly to Destruction; every Step of it is a Descent into Hell, and next to the *lowermost* is the *bottomless* Pit, and for all we know, the very *last* Step we took brought us to the Brinks of the flaming Abyss; and if it did, one Step further will set us beyond all Hope of Recovery. For in our *sinful* Progress we are wading forwards in a *shelving* Pool, which the farther we go, the *deeper* it is, and so *deeper* and *deeper* till we come to the Bottom of it; so that at every Step we are in Danger of going beyond our Depth, and plunging our selves into an *irrecoverable* Ruin; for we know not how soon we may be snatched away in our Iniquities; and if it should so happen, that after we have sinned *this* Moment, we should die the next, this will determine our *everlasting* Fate, and sink us into *eternal* Misery.

Wherefore as we tender the safety of our *precious* Souls, let us speedily forsake this *dangerous* Road in which Perdition *way-lays*, and *Hell* gapes to devour us every step we go; and return unto our Lord in whom our safety lyes. As yet the Opportunity of Salvation is in our Hands, but before to morrow Morning it may slip away from between our Fingers, and vanish *for ever*, and we that are *this* Day wallowing in our Sins, may before the *next* be roaring in *Hell*. So that while we defer and put off our Repentance from Day to Day, we do as it were cast Lots for our Souls, and venture our *everlasting* Hopes upon a Contingency, that is not in our Power to dispose of. As yet the Gate of Mercy is o-

pen to us, and our *blessed Lord* stands ready with his Arms *out-stretched* to welcome and receive us; but for all we know if we enter not presently, the Gate may be shut within a few Moments, and then though we knock and cry till our Hearts ake, *Lord, Lord open to us*, we shall receive no other Answer, but *Depart from me I know you not*. O Good God! How are we besotted then, that rather than begin our Repentance *to day*, we will wilfully run the Hazard of being eternally *miserable* before *to morrow Morning*! For if this should be the *Evening* of our Day of Tryal, as for all we know it may, our *Life* and *Eternity* depends upon what we are now doing; and therefore one would think it should highly concern us wisely to manage this last Stake, the *winning* or *losing* whereof may prove our *making* or *undoing*. In pity therefore to our *perishing* Souls, let us return to our *Saviour*, before it be *too late*, before our *Feet stumble on the dark Mountains*, and we fall down into *everlasting* Darkness. And being returned and re-united to him, let us have a Care we do not revolt again; for if we draw back we cancel our Repentance, and forfeit all its *blessed* Fruits and Benefits; and unless we stedfastly persevere and hold out to the end, all the Pains we have taken in our Christian Course will be *for ever* lost, and the Remembrance of it will only administer to our *future* Misery. For How will it vex us in the *other* World to consider the Labour it cost us to take *Heaven* by Storm? How vigorously we strove to mount the *Scaling Ladder*? Through How many Difficulties we had forced our way to that height of Vertue and Religion we were arrived to, and then when we are got as it were to the *topmost* Rounds, and had laid our Hands upon the Battlements of *Heaven*, just ready to leap in and take Possession of all its Joys; How basely we let go our Hold, and so tumbled down from that *stupendous* height into the *bottomless* Abyss of *endless* Misery? Doubtless this Consideration must necessarily sting our *woful* Souls hereafter, and *for ever* inrage them against themselves. Wherefore as we value the Safety of our *precious* Souls, let us, who by our *wilful* Rebellions have gone astray, return, and constantly adhere to our *blessed Saviour*. Alas! Where can we be *happier* than in his Service, who imposeth nothing on us but what contributes to our Welfare? Where can we be *safer* than in his Arms, and under his Protection, who hath the Command and Disposal of all Events, and to whom all Power is given in *Heaven* and *Earth*? Where can we be placed more to *our own* Advantage than under his Guidance and Authority, who never permits any to serve him for nought, but hath engaged himself to recompence our Labour with a Crown of Glory that fades not away? And is it not *strange* that after so many *advantageous* Invitations, we should need to be *fearcd* to our Duty? That after our *blessed Master* hath enjoyned us such a *reasonable*, *gentle*, and infinitely *beneficial* Service, he should be forced to terrify us into it with the Flames of Hell?

IV. I proceed now to the *Fourth Proposition*, *That when the Soul is lost, 'tis lost irrecoverably*; where the Greek Word *ἀντίλλαγμα*, which we render *Exchange*, is used in the same Sense with *ἱξίλασμα*, which signifies a Price of Redemption, denoting that when once a Man hath sold his Soul to Perdition, it is *unredeemable*, and that no Price will be accepted for its Ransom and Deliverance; when a Man's Soul is in *Hell*, under the wretched Bondage of a *damned* Spirit, how little soever he regards it now, he would give all the World, if it were in his Power, to be released again; but if he had a *thousand* Worlds it will not do, his Bondage being such as will admit no Ransom. For these Words of our *Saviour* seem to have been a *common Proverb* of the Age he lived in, and that derived from those words of the Devil in *Job*, *All that a Man hath will he give for his Life*; that is, when a Man is dying, he would willingly part with all to redeem his Life, but all will not do. Which *Proverb* our *Saviour* adapts to his *own* Argument, in which he proceeds from *temporal* to *eternal* Life: If a Man would give so much for his *temporal* Life, What would he not give for his *eternal* one? But as our *temporal* Life is not to be redeemed, so neither is our *eternal* one when once it is lost; for when once our Soul is *lost* or *abandoned* to the State of the Damned,

Damned it is *lost for ever*, and there is no ἀντάλλαγμα, or Ransom that will be accepted of by God for its Redemption thence. In the Prosecution of which Argument I shall endeavour these two things.

1. To shew you that if God be so determined he may, without any Injury either to his *Justice* or *Goodness*, detain *lost* Souls in the Bondage of *Hell for ever*, and absolutely refuse to accept any Ransom for them.

2. That he is actually determined so to do.

1. That if God be so determined, he may without any Injury either to his *Justice* or *Goodness*, detain *lost* Souls in the Bondage of *Hell for ever*, without accepting any Ransom for them. And this I doubt not will plainly appear upon the *due* Consideration of these following Propositions.

1st, That God being the *Sovereign* Being of the World, hath an *unalienable* Right to impose Laws upon all *other* Beings.

2^{ly}, That having this Right, he may justly enforce those Laws with whatsoever Penalties he sees *necessary* or *convenient*.

3^{ly}, That when those Laws he imposes are for the *Good* of his Subjects, it is not only *Justice* but *Goodness* in him to enforce them with the *severest* Penalty.

4^{ly}, That the Penalty of *eternal* Bondage under Misery, is the *severest* and most *effectual* Way to enforce those *beneficial* Laws, and oblige us to the Obedience of them.

5^{ly}, That if God think *good* to enforce his Laws with this Penalty, he hath as much Right to *exact* it when we disobey, as he had to *threaten* and *impose* it.

6^{ly}, That his *actual* exacting of it can no more impeach his *Goodness*, than his *threatning* and *denouncing* it.

1st, That God being the *Sovereign* Being of the World, hath an *unalienable* Right to impose Laws upon all *other* Beings. For he being the *greatest* and most *powerful* Being, can himself be *subject* to no *other* Law but only that of his own Nature; and his *Power* being *infinite* and *unconfined* as well as his *Wisdom*, *Justice*, and *Goodness*, doth sufficiently warrant him to do whatsoever is *consistent* with them. For to be sure a Being of infinite Power and Greatness, can have no Superiour, but must be necessarily exalted above all *other* Authorities by this *incommunicable* Prerogative of his Nature; and being raised above all Authorities, he must have Authority above all, and his *essential* Dominion having no *other* Law to bound it, but only that of his own Nature, he must necessarily have a Right to command whatsoever is *consistent* with his *Wisdom*, *Justice*, and *Goodness*. His *Will* therefore being by the *infinite* Pre-eminence of his Power and Greatness *supreme*, all *other* Wills are obliged to bow before, and prostrate themselves to its *Sovereign* Authority; and there is no Law whatsoever but he may justly impose upon them, provided it be not *repugnant* to that *supreme* Law that is founded in his own Nature. This therefore being premised, that God hath a Right as he is the *Sovereign* Being to give Laws to all other Beings; it hence follows,

2^{ly}. That he may justly enforce those Laws with whatsoever Penalties he sees *necessary* or *convenient*. For Laws without Penalties are rather Petitions than Commands; and unless they carry force enough with them to *over-awe* the Subject, and make themselves obeyed, they want the *formal* Sanction and Obligation of a Law. To have a Power therefore of imposing Penalties must necessarily be *inseparable* from the Power of making Laws, because they are the Penalties that make the Laws to oblige, that give them Power to command, and enforce them with an *awful* Authority. And as the Power of giving Laws supposes the Power of imposing Penalties, so it supposes a Power of imposing such Penalties as may be *sufficient* to encline and awe the Subject into Obedience, against all Reasons to the contrary. For unless the Penalty be *great* enough to *outweigh* all other Considerations, the Law which it enforces will be extremely *defective* in Point of Obligation, and leave the Subject as much reason to disobey as to obey. God therefore being by his own *natural* Right the *Supreme* Law-giver of the World, must be supposed to have an *equal* Right of enforcing his Laws with such Penalties as in his own *infinite* Wisdom he shall think *necessary*

to oblige his Creatures to obey him; and there is no Penalty can be too *rigorous* or *severe* which is *necessary* to enable his Laws to oblige and command us. Wherefore according as he sees his Subjects *more* or *less* tempted, or inclined to disobey him, so will he need *greater* or *less* Penalties to oblige us to Obedience; and therefore foreseeing what a *strong* Propensity to Evil there would be in our Nature, and with what *importunate* Temptations this would be excited and wrought upon, he could not but foresee that the *severest* Penalties would be necessary to back and enforce his Laws, and being *necessary* for that end, he must needs have a Right to impose them, how *severe* soever they might be; nor is this Severity less *good* than it is *just*; considering,

3/y, That when those Laws he imposes are for the *good* of his Subjects, it is not only an Act of Justice in him to impose them with the *severest* Penalties, but of Goodness. And this is really the Case as to those Laws which God hath imposed upon us; for the Matter of them all is something tending to our good, something or other that is *perfective* of our Natures, and conducive to our Happiness; and being so, the *greater* the Penalty is which they are backt and enforced with, the *greater* Demonstration it is of God's Care and Zeal for our Happiness. For the End of Penalty is to oblige us to Obedience; and when all Obedience is for our *good*, the more strictly he obliges us to it, the more he befriends us. When a *distracted* Man is endeavouring to mischief and destroy himself, it is Kindness to bind him though it be with Chains of Iron. When therefore God found us so *prone* to injure our selves by *wicked* and *mischievous* Actions, it was Mercy to bind our Hands with his Threatnings of Punishment; and the *stronger* his Bands are, the more they express his Kindness; because the more they oblige us to be *kind* to our selves, and *true* to our own Interest. And certainly for God to lay us under the *strongest* Obligations to be *happy*, is so far from being a Blemish to his Goodness, that it is a most *glorious* Expression of it; but if we will be so *obstinate* as to run into the mouth of those Threatnings which he hath levelled against us to scare us into Happiness, it is *just* with him to discharge them upon us, and make us feel the Effects of our Folly and Madness. Since therefore the Reason of the Penalty wherewith God hath enforced his Laws, is to oblige us to be *happy*; and since the *greater* it is, the more force it must have to oblige us, it hence necessarily follows, that though it be not only a *great*, but an *eternal* one; yet it is not at all *inconsistent* with his Goodness; especially if we consider,

4/y, That the Penalty of *eternal* Misery, as it is the *severest*, so it is the most *effectual* to enforce those *beneficial* Laws which God hath imposed on us, and to oblige us to the Observance of them. For to deter us from Sin, who are so vehemently prone to it, it was very requisite that the Penalty denounced against it, should not only be *great* as to the Degree, but endless also as to the Duration of it; that so it might cut us off from all pretence of Presumption, and leave us no ground of Encouragement to be *wicked*. For we are exceeding *apt* to slight and undervalue those *Evils* which are proposed to deter us from the *Goods* which we vehemently desire, especially when these *Goods* are *present* and *sensible*, and those *Evils* *future* and *invisible*. For thus we conclude, the *Good* that is before us we may enjoy a great while; and, which is very considerable, we may presently enter upon the Possession of it; but as for the *Evil* that is *consequent* to it, it may be a long while before it befalls us; and when it doth, there is this Comfort, that it will at *last* have an end; and therefore let what will follow, let us ever seize the *present Good*, and make the *best* use we can of it; and as for the *future Evil*, whenever it happens, the Prospect of its End, though it be never so *remote*, will enable us to bear it more chearfully. For *ten Years present* Pleasure vehemently desired, will far more effectually persuade us, than a *future* Misery of *double* the Duration; and therefore if the *future* Penalty denounced against our Sin were *finite* and *temporary*, it would not be *sufficient* to ballance those *present* Pleasures with which we are continually importuned and solicited; for the Penalty being proposed to deter us from Pleasures which we dearly love, we are upon that account inclined to make as *light* of it as may be, and to flatter our selves with

with the *softest* and *easiest* Representations of it; so that to be sure if there were any one *comfortable* Circumstance in it, our Thoughts would presently insist upon that, and urge it as a Reason why we should not be afraid of it. So that if the Penalty of our Sin had in it but the Circumstance of being *finite*, to be sure whenever it controuled our *vicious* Desires, we should still make this a Pretence to despise it; *Well, let it be never so terrible, it will have an end.* Wherefore to inable it to terrify us effectually, it was requisite that it should not only be *great*, but *endless*; that it being stripped of all *tolerable* Circumstances, we might be *able* to find nothing in it to qualify the Terror of it. But now it being not only *great* but *eternal*, the Threat of it, which, like a Cloud, hangs *lowering* over us, hath no *bright side* to divert our Thoughts from the Blackness and Horror of it; so that whenever we think of it, and weigh it in the Ballance with our Sins, we must resolve to forsake them, or chuse to be *desperate*. Since therefore an *eternal* Penalty was so necessary to inforce God's Law; and since his Law is for our *good*, it is *plain* that his so inforcing it can blemish neither his Justice nor Goodness. Wherefore though we should smart *for ever* for our Disobedience hereafter, we can have no *just* Reason to complain of *God*; especially considering,

5ly, That if *God* shall think *good* to inforce his Law with such an *eternal* Penalty, he must be supposed to have as much Right to exact it upon our Disobedience, as he had to threaten and impose it. For as *Supremacy* over all *other* Beings gives a Right to make Laws, and inforce them with Threatnings of Punishment; so when he hath actually imposed Laws upon us, our Disobedience to them gives a Right to inflict on us the Punishments which he threatned when he imposed them. For in all *legal* Punishments the Right of Threatning them is founded on the Power of the *Sovereign*; but the Right of executing them in the Disobedience of the *Subject*; and if the Penalty be such, as that upon the *Subjects* Disobedience the *Sovereign* cannot justly execute it, it was *unjust* for him to threaten it; for to threaten legally, is to claim a Right to punish upon Condition the Law be broken and violated; and that *Sovereign* who upon Condition of the *Subjects* Disobedience, claims a Right to *more* Punishment than he can justly exact of him when he disobeys, pretends to *more* Right than he really hath, and so by consequence his Claim is *unrighteous*. If therefore by the Threat of his Law *God* may justly claim a Right to punish us *for ever* if we disobey, then doubtless when we have actually disobeyed, he may as justly exact it, and doth no more exceed his Right when he inflicts what he threatned, than he did when he threatned to inflict it. If he had Right to say, *I will punish you for ever upon Condition you transgress my Laws*, then upon our performing that Condition, he must necessarily have Right to do as he said. So that our transgressing his Law, being a *sufficient* Condition for him to found a *rightful* Claim to punish us *eternally*, by our doing this Condition we justly forfeit our selves to *eternal* Punishment, and by *our own* Act and Deed voluntarily resign up our *precious* Souls to the *just* Lash of an *everlasting* Vengeance; which as the *Justice* of *God* is no way obliged to suspend, so neither is his *Goodness*, which now is our only Reserve; considering,

6ly, And Lastly, That *God's* exacting this *eternal* Penalty of us, can no more impeach his *Goodness*, than his threatning and denouncing it. That it is highly *consistent* with his *Goodness* to threaten it, I have already proved; but if it were not also *consistent* therewith to inflict it, to be sure his own Wisdom would never admit him to threaten it. For to what end should he threaten to act contrary to the *Goodness* of his Nature? Either he must design to make us believe that he intends to act, or not; if the *first*, he must thereby design to abuse, and misrepresent himself in the Opinion of his Creatures, to blemish the Reputation, and expose the Honour of his own *infinite* Goodness. But if he did not design to make us believe it, to what end should he threaten it, since unless we believe it, it can no more affect us than the firing of a *Gun* that is charged with nothing but Powder, and was designed to make a Noise only, but to do no Execution? So that if it be *repugnant* to *God's* *Goodness* to execute this Penalty, it must be *repugnant* to his *Wisdom* to denounce it; but it being not only *consistent* with, but

an Expression of his *Goodness* to denounce it, when he designs thereby to oblige us more firmly to our Duty, in which our *everlasting* Happiness is included, it may be no *less* an Expression of the same *Goodness* to execute it upon us, when we by our *obstinate* Persistence in Sin have render'd our selves *incapable* of Mercy. For now there being no more *good* to be done upon us, it will be an Act of *Goodness* in God to punish us *for ever*, if thereby any *good* may be done to *others* by us; if by making us *everlasting* Monuments of his *just* Indignation, he can *everlastingly* warn and secure *others* from those *desperate* Courses that ruined us. For in this Case his punishing us *for ever*, may be an *effectual* Means to do that *good* to others which he intended to do to us, by threatening to punish us *for ever*, and they may take warning by our Punishment, though we would take none by his Threatning. And when by being obstinately *deaf* to the Threat of *eternal* Perdition, which God denounced on purpose to oblige us to be *happy*, we have not only forfeited our selves to it, but have also *sinned* our selves into an Incapacity of having any *good* done upon us; the only Use which the *Divine Goodness* can make of us for the *future*, is to do *good* to others by us; which it can no otherwise do, but by making our *everlasting* Suffering an *everlasting* Example for them to take warning by. For though there is no doubt but every *virtuous* Soul shall be hereafter so confirmed in its State of Beatitude, as that it shall never fall from it; yet shall it be confirmed no otherwise than by the force of those Reasons and *invincible* Motives which shall then continually urge, and immoveably determine it unto that which is good: One of which Reasons, as we may reasonably suppose, will be their prospect of the *endless* Miseries of the *Damned*, which will be an *everlasting* Monitor to them, and together with their own Sense of the *ravishing* Pleasures of *Goodness*, will secure them *for ever* from falling. For if the *Angels* of *Heaven* took warning by the Fall and Ruin of their *Apostate Brethren*, as doubtless they did, and thereupon became more immovably confirmed in *Innocence* and *Goodness*; why may we not as well suppose, that one of those Reasons by which the *Spirits of just Men* are so immovably confirmed in their *Heavenly State*, is the *sad* Example of the *endless* Miseries of the Wicked? If therefore when God hath denounced *eternal* Misery against us, on purpose to threaten us into Happiness, we will take no warning, it is an Act of *Goodness* in him to inflict it upon us, since thereby he may so effectually contribute to the confirming of *others* in *eternal* Happiness. For if we will not be wrought on by such a *dreadful* Denunciation, there is no good can be done upon us; and when we are past Recovery, and are forfeited by *our own* Obstinacy into the hands of God's Vengeance, it will be an Act of *Goodness* in him so to dispose of us as may be most for the *good* of others, and consequently to dispose of us to *eternal* Misery, and by so doing to make use of us as Arguments to confirm and establish *others* in *eternal* Happiness; that so our Sufferings may be to them what his Threatnings were to us, Arguments to oblige us to be *happy for ever*. And so I have done with the *first* Thing propos'd, which was to shew you that if God be so determined, he may, without any Injury either to his *Justice* or *Goodness*, retain *lost* Souls in the Bondage of *Hell for ever*, and absolutely refuse to accept any Ransom for them.

I now proceed to the *Second* Head of Discourse, namely, to prove that God is actually determined so to do. And this I shall endeavour to demonstrate by these *three* Reasons.

1. Because he hath already exacted a Ransom for the Souls of Men, to which no *other* can be *equivalent*; from whence we may reasonably infer, that if *this* be rejected he will accept no *other*.
2. Because he hath expressly declared *himself* to be thus determined.
3. Because having thus declared himself, we must suppose that either he intended this Declaration only for a *Scare crow*, or that he is determined to act accordingly.

1st, That *God* is determined to conclude lost Souls under *endless* Misery, and admit no Ransom for them, appears from hence; because he hath already exacted a Ransom for them, to which no *other* can be *equivalent*; from whence we may reasonably infer, that if *this* be rejected, he will accept no *other*. When by our *first* Apostacy from *God*, we stained the Innocence of our Natures, and forfeited our Lives to the *just* Vengeance of *Heaven*; so terribly was it then incensed against us, that it would accept no *weaner* Ransom for us than the *precious* Blood of the *Son of God*; for so *St. Peter* tells us, *That we were not redeemed with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold; but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot*, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. And though this Ransom was of such a *vast* and *incomparable* Value, that all the Treasures in *Heaven* and *Earth* are *insignificant* Trifles to it; yet was the Virtue of it to extend no further than to those, who, by a *lively* Faith, and *unfeigned* Repentance, returned from their Rebellion to their Duty and Allegiance; which if we do not, but instead thereof obstinately persist in our Wickedness and Folly, we renounce all our Part and Interest in the Blood of our *Saviour*; and do in effect declare, that upon such Terms as those, we will not be beholding to him for our Ransom; but that rather than accept of Redemption upon such *ungrateful* Conditions, we will trust to the Courtesy of the Vengeance of *God*, and abide the most *fatal* Effects of it. When therefore by persisting to the End in our Unbelief and Impenitence, we have finally rejected the Blood of *Christ*, and utterly extinguish'd all our Right and Title to it; What Pretence of Reason have we to hope, that *God* will ever accept of any *other* Ransom for us? When to the Sins, by which we made the *first* Forfeiture of our Souls, we have added the *rank* and *horrid* Impiety of trampling on the Blood of the *Son of God*, and so are not only not Redeemed by it from the Vengeance to come, but are a *thousand* times more deeply intralled to it, by reason of that *additional* Guilt we have contracted by squandering away the Price of our Redemption: With what Face can we expect, in the midst of such *black* Circumstances, that *God* should accept of any Exchange for our Souls? He that would not release us from the Obligation of our *first* Guilt, upon any *less* Consideration than the Blood of his Son, what *likelihood* is there that any Consideration should move him to release us after we have so prodigiously augmented our Guilt by rejecting his Blood, and finally renouncing all our Interest in it? Doubtless he that demanded so *vast* a Ransom for us when our Guilt was so comparatively *small* and *inconsiderable*, will account no Ransom *sufficient* when we have so transcendently enhanced and multiplied it. For if the Blood of *Christ*, which is of such an *unspeakable* value, can give us no Relief without our *willing* Acceptance of it upon the Terms it is proposed to us, then when we have finally refused it on those Terms, it must be something that is more *valuable* than his Blood that must relieve us; something that is *sufficient* not only to redeem us from those Guilt which his Blood was a Ransom for, but also to expiate the Guilt of our trampling on his Blood, which is the *greatest* and *blackest* of all. But since the Blood of *Christ* is incomparably the most *precious* Ransom that *Heaven* and *Earth* could afford, What hope is there that when *this* is rejected by us, *God* should accept any *other* in Exchange for our Souls?

2^{ly}, That *God* is really determined to conclude lost Souls under *endless* Misery, and admit no Ransom for them, appears also from hence. Because he hath expressly declared himself to be so determined. For so our *blessed Saviour*, who was the *great* Messenger of his Will to the World, hath expressly told us, that the *final* Sentence of the Wicked shall be to *everlasting Fire*, *Matth.* 25. 41. and that the Fate of *obstinate* Sinners, whom he compares to Chaff, shall be to be *burned up with unquenchable Fire*. But perhaps you may object, that these Texts only prove the *Everlastingness* of the Fire in which they shall suffer, and not their *everlasting* Suffering in it; for this Fire perhaps may immediately consume, and utterly destroy them, and render them *insensible* of Misery for ever. To which I answer, That the contrary is most evident; for they are expressly said to live in this Fire, and to perform the Functions of *living* Beings in Misery;

to weep and wail, and gnash their Teeth, Matth. 13. 42. and in the Parable of Dives, he is said to lift up his Eyes in Hell, being in Torments, and to see Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his Bosom; and to cry out to Abraham, Father Abraham have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the Tip of his Finger in Water, and cool my Tongue, for I am tormented in this Flame, Luke 16. 23.—

A plain Evidence that this Fire is to torment and not to consume them. Well, but this you will say imports no more than their being tortured in Hell for some period of Time, after which, it may be, they may cease to be, and consequently to be miserable. To which I answer, That elsewhere it is expressly asserted, that this Torture is to endure for ever; for these, saith our Saviour, speaking of the Wicked, shall go away into everlasting Punishment, Matth. 25. 46. And how can their Punishment be everlasting, unless we suppose them to subsist everlastingly in it? If you say it is everlasting, only as it is an everlasting Destruction, or Privation of their Being: I answer, That in other Places of Scripture it is expressly asserted, that this everlasting Punishment is a positive thing; for it is said to be a Worm that never dieth, Mark 9. 44. that is, that to all Eternity lives and preys upon the wretched Sufferers; and more expressly yet, Revel. 20. 10. those that are cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, are said to be tormented there Day and Night for ever and ever: Where the Greek Word, βασανισθῶσι, doth plainly denote positive Torment, and referring peculiarly to a Rack, denotes the kind of this positive Torment, to be such as is not designed to put an end to our Lives, but to continue them with inexpressible Pains. For this we know is the proper Use and Design of a Rack; and accordingly upon this tormenting Rack of Hellish Punishment, they are said to have no rest Day nor Night, Rev. 14. 11. So that the eternal Misery of lost Souls, is as fully and expressly asserted in Scripture, as it could well have been, had it been expressed with a Design to leave no pretence of Exception for Gainfayers; and when a thing is as plainly asserted to be, as it could well have been, if it really were, either we must suppose the Thing to be, or else the Assertion to be fallacious. So that if we think that God's own Word doth truly signify his Determination, we must from hence be forced to conclude, that he is really determined to shut up lost Souls in eternal Misery, and admit no Ransom for them.

3ly, And Lastly, This also appears, because if after he hath thus declared himself, there were any Reason to think that he is not determined to act accordingly, that Reason would warrant us to believe that this Declaration was only intended for a Scare-crow, and consequently to condemn and despise it. For against all that hath been said, it may be (and is by some Men) objected, That God is not bound to do as he threatens; that when by our Disobedience we have incurred the Penalty he threatens, he hath an undoubted Right indeed to inflict it upon us, and consequently may, if he please, inflict it without any Wrong or Injustice; but then, if he please, he may dispense with it too, either in the whole, or in part, as he sees convenient. For the Punishment being only a Debt which the Sinner owes to him, he is no more obliged than other Creditors are, to exact the utmost farthing of it; but may exact or remit the whole, or abate what part soever he pleases; and therefore it is to be hoped, that he being a merciful Creditor will not be so extreme and rigorous as to exact of us the utmost Punishment we owe him; but that when he hath made us smart a while for our Folly, he will either release us into a more happy Condition, or put an end to our Beings and Miseries together. To which I might answer, That when by our Sins we have forfeited our selves to the just Vengeance of God, it is infinite Mercy and Goodness to others, to punish us according to his Threatning; and therefore when we by our Sins have render'd our selves incapable of his Mercy, that Mercy which now inclines him to do good to us, will then equally incline him to do good to others, by the dreadful Example of our Punishment; and so he may be a very merciful Creditor, and notwithstanding exact of us the utmost Farthing. But this I have already largely insisted on, and therefore, 2ly, I answer, That what God may do is not for us to determine, when he may, or may not, and is obliged to neither; but

but when he hath expressly denounced what he will do, we can have no Reason to hope that he will be *better* than his Word. For if after that he hath denounced, that if we persist in our Sin, he will punish us *for ever* for it, he should have left us any *just* Reason to hope that he will not, he would thereby have countermined himself, and baffled the Design of his *own* Denunciation, which is to terrify his *rebellious* Creatures from their Sins, and to awe them into Obedience to his Laws. But how much Reason soever he hath given me to hope, that he will not be so *severe* to me as he threatens, so much Reason he must have given me not to be afraid of his Threatnings. If I had any *just* Reason to believe that he will be more *merciful* than to inflict what he denounces, it is an *irrational* thing for me to dread his Denunciations; for I know God will do as *just* Reason directs, and therefore I must conclude either my Reason to be *false*, or God's Denunciation to be a *Scare-crow*; for if there be any *just* Reason why his Mercy and Goodness should interpose, and avert the Execution of his Threats from me, I ought not to be afraid of them, because I am sure he can do nothing that his Mercy and Goodness forbids: But if there be no Reason for such an Interposure, I am unreasonably *presumptuous* to expect it. So that either my Expectation must be *groundless*, or my Fear of God's Threatnings *irrational*: And can it be imagined that the *Wise* God would ever go about to awe his Creatures into Obedience, by threatening their Sin with such Punishments as he knows they have *just* Reason not to be afraid of? Whatsoever therefore God may do, I am sure if we go on in our Sins, we can have no Reason to hope that he will either not punish us at all, or *less* than he hath threatened; or consequently, that he will abate us *one* moment of that *eternal* Misery which he hath so plainly and expressly denounced against us. What then remains, but that since when our Soul is *lost*, it is *lost for ever*, we now take all *possible* Care to secure it while we may.

V. I proceed now to the *fifth* and *last* Proposition; *That this irrecoverable Loss of the Soul is of such VAST and UNSPEAKABLE Moment, that the Gain of all the World is not sufficient to compensate it: What shall it profit a Man, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?* That is, It will not profit him at all; nay it will be so far from *that*, that it will turn to his *unspeakable* Loss and Disadvantage: Though by renouncing his Profession of my Doctrine, or his Obedience of my Laws, a Man were sure to make himself Lord of all the World, and to possess and enjoy it as long as he lived; yet if for so doing he should afterwards lose his Soul, as most certainly he will, he will find in the issue, that he hath made a *woful* Bargain of it, and be forced to acknowledge himself a *vast* Loser, when he comes to suffer those *intolerable* Damages which the Loss of a Soul implies. For the Proof of which, I shall run a Comparison between the *Gain* and the *Loss*, and therein endeavour to represent to you how much the Evil of *this* Loss exceeds the Good of *that* Gain; and this I shall do in these following Particulars:

1st, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *imaginary* and *fantastical*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *real* and *substantial*.

2^{ly}, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *narrow* and *particular*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *large* and *universal*.

3^{ly}, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *convertible* into *Evil*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is never to be improved into *Good*.

4^{ly}, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *mixt* and *sophisticated*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *pure* and *unmingled*.

5^{ly}, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *full* of Intermissions; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *continual*.

6^{ly}, The *Good* that is in the Gain is *short* and *transitory*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *eternal*.

1st. The *Good* that is in the Gain is *imaginary* and *fantastical*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss is *real* and *substantial*. For whatsoever we gain of this World's Goods beyond what is necessary to serve the *real* Occasions, and *modest* Conveni-

encies of this *present* Life, administers to no *other* purpose but only to gratify an *extravagant* Fancy: For all the *real* Need that a Man hath of these *worldly Goods*, is only to maintain and provide for his Body; for his Soul hath no more need of them, than an Angel hath of Money to buy Victuals and Clothes with: And one would think so *small* a thing as an *humane* Body is, could not need *many* things; and that a piece of *animate* Matter, some six foot long, might be very *easily* and *cheaply* provided for: And indeed so it would be if we could once forbear fancying its Needs to be *greater* than they are; but if we let loose the Reins to an *ungoverned* Fancy, That will so extend its Needs beyond the Capacities of its Nature, that all the World will be *too* little to content the *extravagant* Appetites of this *little* Clod of Earth. Lay but your Fancies aside, and you will want no *other* Apparel but what is *sufficient* to keep you *warm*, and *clean*, and *modest*, and with this you may be very cheaply provided; but if you will resolve to humour that *capricious* thing, you will want the Revenue of a *Lordship* to cover your Nakedness. Keep but your Fancies in order, and your Appetites will be contented with *plain* and *wholsom* Provisions, and this a *small* Income will furnish you with; but if once you let loose that *roving* Faculty, and suffer it to grow *wanton* and *delicate*, that will so stretch your Appetites, that the Stores of all the *four Elements* will scarce be *sufficient* to gratify their Luxuries. And so it is in all *other* things appertaining to the Body; whose Wants according to Natures Measures are *small*, but according to Fancies are *infinite*. So that if a Man had all the World in his Possession, yet all but that *little little* Part of it that is either naturally *necessary*, or rationally *convenient* for his *bodily* Subsistence, would be *good* for nothing but to humour the Desires of an *extravagant* Fancy; which are so far from being quenched, that they are but the more inflamed by Injoyment. If I had all the Wealth of *Cæsar*, the *good* Fortunes of *Cæsar*, and the Dominions of *Alexander*, What would it advantage me? I should only have abundance of Things that I have no *real* need of; Things, that if I would my self, I might easily be as *happy* without, as I can be with them. For would I but make my Nature and my Reason the measure of my Wants, I might always live next door to Satisfaction; and as for my Wants, they would be so *light* and *portable*, that I might easily take them, and carry them along with me, and lay them down almost wheresoever I pleased. Whereas if I permit my Fancy to grow *wild* and *imaginative*, I shall always find my Wants doubled with my Injoyments; and whereas when I had but *five Pounds*, I needed but *five hundred*; when I have *five hundred*, I shall need *five thousand*; and so on till at last I need beyond all possibility of Satisfaction. Since therefore all that this World can do for me, besides the supplying of a *few modest* Needs, which a very *little* of it will do, What a *miserable* Loser shall I be, if meerly to gratify my Fancy, I forfeit my Soul, and incur the *real* Miseries of a *woful* Eternity, in Pursuit of the *fantastick* Joys of a Moment? If to purchase Things which I shall never be the better for, which while I have not, I do not need, and which when I have I shall not enjoy; I should not only squander away the most *sustantial* Happiness, but plunge my self into a *vast* Abyss of *real* and *intolerable* Miseries: O good God! What a *woful* Bargain shall I have of it? For though the Pleasure of our Sin doth always vanish on the Brink of Fruition, and like a *golden* Dream, concludes in a *disappointed* Expectation; yet the Sting that is to follow it will produce in us not only a *real*, but an extremely *sharp* and *dolorous* Perception; so extremely *sharp*, that it will pierce our very Hearts, and cause us to roar out with Anguish for ever. And alas! What a *poor* Compensation is it for a Man that must e're long be enduring the Tortures of a *tedious* Famine, to be entertain'd a *few* Moments with the Picture of a Feast, or the Story of *Cleopatra's* Banquet: or, What Man in his Wits would ever forfeit himself, for the *mere* Fancy of a Pleasure, to the *lingering* Torments of a Rack? And yet, O *wretched* Sinner, thou actest a *thousand* times more extravagantly; who, by thy *unlawful* Pursuits of the *imaginary* Pleasures of this World, betrayest thy Soul to the *bitter* Torments of *Hell*.

2ly, The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *narrow* and *particular*, but the *Evil* that is in the Loss of a Soul is *large* and *universal*. 'Tis but a Part of our selves, and that the *worst* Part too, that this World's *Goods* can Benefit and Advantage; they can only clothe our Bodies more splendidly, and feed them more deliciously, and furnish them with more Plenty of *outward* Accommodations; but alas for the Soul, they are as *insignificant* to her, as *Musical* Sounds are to the Eye of the Body, or *magnificent* Shews to the Ear: They cannot improve the *meanest* Faculty about her, nor make her in any respect either the *better* or the *wiser*. And as for the Body it self, wherein all their Lines do center, there are a *thousand* Cases in which they are perfectly *useless*; for they cannot give *Health* to it in any *Sickness*, nor *Ease* in any *Pain*; they cannot recover a *lost* Sense, nor restore a *withered* Limb, nor rectify a *deformed* Feature; nor is it in their Power to reprieve it from the Grave one moment beyond the *natural* Period of its Mortality. So extremely *narrow* are these *worldly* Goods which we are so greedy of, that they can extend their Benefits no farther than the Body; nay, and even to *that* they are vastly *inadequate*, there being a thousand *bodily* Necessities whereunto they cannot extend themselves. So that if to purchase these we expose our selves to *eternal* Perdition, we shall have in comparison but a *drop* of *Good* to compensate our selves for an *Ocean* of *Misery*. For the *Misery* of *Hell* is as *vast* and *extensive* as our Capacity of Suffering, and hath in it an *appropriate* Torment for every *sensible* Part of our Natures. It racks the *wretched* Soul in every Faculty, and fills up all its Capacities of *Misery* with Anguish and Vexation: It afflicts its Mind with *horrid* Apprehensions, wounds and gashes its Conscience with *dismal* Reflections; it fetters its Will with *black* and *venomous* Passions, and starves its Desires with *everlasting* Famine. And as it leaves no part of the Soul untormented, but covers it over from Head to Foot with Wounds, and Bruises, and *putrifying* Sores; so when the Body at the Resurrection is re-united to it, the *Misery* of *Hell* will extend to this also; for then it will have superadded to its *Spiritual* Plagues the most *exquisite* Instrument of *Corporeal* Torment, viz. the *dark*, and *noisom*, and *scorching* Flames of a *burning* World, which will seize upon the Bodies of *Reprobate* Sinners, they being finally abandoned to them by the *last* and *final* Sentence, and stick close to, and burn through them *for ever*. And their Bodies being thus wrapped and clothed in *flaming* Sulphur, must needs be exquisitely vexed in every Part and Member, and feel as many Torments as they have Senses to indure them. Thus the *Miseries* of *Hell*, you see, are far more *extensive* than the *Goods* of this World; for whereas *these* extend only to our Bodies, and can relieve them but in a *few* of their Necessities, *those* over-spread both the Body and Soul, and are both *co-eternal* and *co-equal* with their *utmost* Capacities of Suffering: So that when by our *unlawful* Pursuits of the *Goods* of this World we forfeit our selves to *eternal* Perdition, we plunge our *whole* Nature into *intolerable* *Misery* for the *Ease* and the *Pleasure* of one *particular* Part. Now would any Man in his Wits, do you think, eat *Rats-bane* for no *other* Reason, but only because it is *sweet*? Would he to please his *liquorish* Palate diffuse a *tormenting* Poison over all his Parts and Members? Or would he think the *Pleasure* of one *sweet* Gust a *sufficient* Compensation for all the *succeeding* Spasms and Convulsions? Surely no; none but a Mad-man could ever admit of such an Extravagance. And yet, O *wretched* Sinner! Thou art far more *wild* and *extravagant*; for a *particular* *Good* thou throwest thy self headlong into an *universal* *Misery*; and to gratify thy Body in a *few little* things, dost utterly ruin both thy Body and Soul. To please thy self in *one* part, thou punishest thy self in *all*; and for the gratifying *one* Sense, derivest a *tormenting* Venom over all the Senses of thy Nature; and so *in fine*, wilt have nothing but the *Pleasure* of a Taste or a Touch to compensate thee for all the Agonies and Torments that thy Body and Soul together are *able* to sustain. And what a *poor* Compensation this is, I leave you to judge.

3dly, The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *convertible* into *Evil*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss of a Soul is never to be improved into *Good*. When

we are arrived to the Possession of those *outward* Goods which at present we do so greedily gasp after, it is a very *uncertain* thing whether they will prove Goods to us or no; whether, even as to this Life, we shall be the *better*, or the *worse* for them. For it is very often seen that these *worldly* Goods prove the *worst* of Plagues to those that are the Owners of them, and that those things which we account the Blessings of this Life, do prove the Curses and Miseries of it. When by a *thousand Lies, Flatteries, and Circumventions*, a Man hath raised himself up to that Pinnacle of Preferment which his Ambition aspired to, how often hath that Height proved the Occasion of his Fall, by exposing him to those Storms of Envy and Misfortune which would have blown over his Head, had he sat quietly *below*, and been contented to enjoy himself in a more *private* Fortune? And so when by an *infinite* number of *Rapines, and Oppressions, Frauds, and dishonest Compliances*, a Man hath amassed together a *vast* deal of Wealth, how often hath that proved the Occasion of his Undoing? Sometimes by exposing him to the *rapacious* Covetousness of *others*, but most commonly to the *ill* Effects of his own *extravagant* Luxuries. For usually when Fraud is the *Procurer* of Wealth, Wealth is the *Band* of Luxury; this being the *best* Expedient to drown the Cry of the Guilt of our Dishonesty. And then by that time Luxury hath produced its *natural* Effects, it commonly leaves the *wealthy* Possessor in a far *worse* Condition than Poverty; it leaves him so racked with the *Gout* or the *Stone*, so overwhelmed with *Catarrhs* or *Dropsies*, that the *miserable* Man would be heartily contented to part with all his Wealth for Ease, and to return to Poverty so he might but return to the Health of an *honest* Plough-man; whereas would he have contented himself with the *honest* Acquest of a *moderate* Fortune, he need have wanted nothing but Temptations to Luxury, and Provisions for tormenting Diseases. So that in short, whilst we are pursuing this World's Goods, we know not what our Game will be till we have seized on it; peradventure instead of *Venison* we are hunting a Serpent, which, when we have caught, will sting and in-venom us, and prove a Plague instead of a Satisfaction. And is it not *extravagant* Madness then for Men to run themselves into all those Miseries, which *everlasting* Ruin and Perdition implies, for the sake of such *uncertain* Goods, which when they are possessed of, for all they know, may do them a thousand times more Mischief than Good? For as for those *future* Miseries, which by our *sinful* Pursuits of these *present* Goods we incur, they are all such *absolute* and *essential* Evils, that there is not one drop of Good to be extracted out of them; for as they are *eternal* they are of an *unalterable* Nature, and the same *insupportable* Plagues they were yesterday, they will continue to be to day, and for *ever*. Indeed if we were to out-live them, they might be accidentally *advantageous* to us; they might discipline our Natures for an Happiness to come, and serve as so many Toils to our *future* Pleasures; and when they are past, the Remembrance of them, like *bitter* Sauce, might give a Relish to our Joys, and render them more *grateful* and *delicious*: But we being to indure 'em for ever, there is nothing Good can succeed them, no *possible* Advantage can be derived from them; for in Miseries that have no End, there can be nothing but Misery. And is it not very strange then, that Men should forfeit their Souls to such *unalterable* Miseries, for such Goods as may be Plagues to them? When for all they know there may be such a Train of Mischiefs at the Heels of these *Pleasures, and Profits, and Honours* they are so greedy of, as may out-weigh all the good of them, and render them a *dear* Penny-worth, tho' they had never pawned their Souls for them. And if it so prove, as it is very *probable* it may, then their Bargain is *worse* than if they had pawned their Souls for nothing; because they have incurred *one* Misery only to seize upon *another*, and have waded through a *temporal* to come at an *eternal* One.

4thly, The Good that is in the Gain of this World, is *mixed* and *sophisticated*; but the Evil that is in the Loss of a Soul is *pure* and *unmingled*. Should a Man sell his Soul for never so *great* a Share of this World's Goods, he would find he had gotten but a very *uneasie* Purchase; a Purchase as he can neither secure with-
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out a *great* deal of Care, nor yet enjoy without a great deal of Dissatisfaction. For what we call ours, is really ours but for our Portion of Expence and Use; and all that is ours beyond this, is only the Title and the Care, and the Trouble of securing and dispensing it; for let but your Servants walk into your *Gardens of Pleasure*, and the Air shall fan them with as *gentle* Gales, the Flowers delight them with as *fragrant* Odours, and the Birds entertain them with as *ravishing* Melodies. And in some Sense your *meanest* Servants enjoy what you have with *far* more freedom than you; for your Possessions are like a *great* Harvest, which many Labourers must bring in, and more must eat of; only you are the Center of all the Cares, and you they fix on; but the Profits run out to all the Lines of your Circle, who usually enjoy their *several* Shares with much more Peace and Quiet than you. You take the Pains to dig the Well, and undergo the Care of supplying and maintaining it; and when you have done, you can drink no more of it than the *meanest* Slave about you; but what you drink can't be so *sweet* and *pure*, because it is dashed with many more Cares and Disturbances. For considering the *infinite* Hazards these *worldly* Goods are exposed to, they must needs carry with them abundance of Cares and Disquietudes; so that when you are possessed of them, you only grasp a Bundle of *gilded* Thorns, which while they *please* your Eyes, will *prick* your Hearts, and continually dis-ease you in the Enjoyment of them. And then for the Enjoyment it self, considered abstractedly from those Cares that surround it, alas it is such as rather creates Desires than Satisfaction; for though at a distance these *Terrestrial* Goods do promise us *fair*; and raise in us *vast* and *boundless* Hopes; yet still when we approach nearer to them, we find our selves miserably deceived. And then our Enjoyment falling so vastly *short* of our Expectation, all those *swelling* Hopes that flattered and tolled us on, fall flat immediately under the Disappointments of Fruition; and accordingly our Desires missing their *promised* Satisfaction, grow more *outrageous* and *violent*. And thus our Enjoyments, as they are compassed with Vexations, so are they mingled with *restless* Discontents, as being all *too little* for our *vast* Desires; which are therefore rather enraged than satisfied with them. What *infinite* Losers therefore must those Men be, who to compass those *sophisticated* Goods which have so many Evils intermixed with them, forfeit their Souls to *everlasting* Perdition? Which is so *vast* and so *intense* an *Evil*, as will admit no degree of *Good* to be intermingled with it; a Misery so *pure* and *unalloyed*, as that it totally excludes all Communication with Happiness, and will not admit the *least* Hope of Ease or Refreshment. For what Ease can we hope for in the *everlasting* Burnings? What Refreshment can we expect in the *unquenchable* Lake of Fire and Brimstone? Doubtless we may as soon hope to find a Cordial in the Sting of a Scorpion, or *sprightly* Nectar in a Nest of Wasps, as one degree of Ease or Comfort in *Hell*. There is not a Gleam of *Light* in all that Region of *Darkness*, not a Drop of *Sweet* in all that *vast* Ocean of *Gall* and *Wormwood*; but it is all Misery, *sharp* and *exquisite* Misery, without the *least* Mixture of Ease, or Hope of Mitigation. Can we then be so *stupid* as to imagine the enjoying this World's *Goods*, which are all such Compositions of *Good* and *Evil*, worth the enduring such *pure* and *abstracted* Miseries for ever? Would you for the Pleasure of an *intemperate* Draught that will quickly end in a Qualm or an Headach, be contented to endure the Torment of being *impaled*? Or provided you might spend this Night in your *lascivious* Enjoyment, which after a *few* Moments will conclude in Shame and Remorse, would you be willing to roar upon the Rack all the Night after? Doubtless you would not. And yet, God knows, these *Pleasures* are not comparably so *disproportionate* to those *Pains*, as the Pleasures of this World are to the Pains of *Eternity*. How then is it *possible* that such *Bitter-sweets* as these are, *Sweets* that are chequered with so many Cares, and alloyed with so many Discontents, and Disappointments, should be *sufficient* to countervail those *intolerable* Miseries which the Loss of our Souls implies?

5thly, The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *full* of Intermiſſions; but the *Evil* that is in the Loſs of a Soul is *continual*. If I were Lord of all the World, I ſhould never be able to live in a *constant* Injoyment of it. For ſuch *wretched* Counterfeits are all the Pleaſures of Senſe, that they will not indure the *Teſt* of a *long* Fruition; for at the beſt they are but Frolicks of Delight that never *ſeize* us but when we are turned *up* to them in *Moods* and *Fits*, and all the Complacencies we have in them are nothing but the *little* Starts of our Appetite, which, as ſoon as it hath done craving, grows a *weary* of them, and ſo enjoys and loaths them by Turns; for they can dwell no longer upon the Appetite than while the Neceſſities of Nature do continue; and every *freſh* Morſel after the Hunger is ſatiſfied, is but a *new* Labour to a *tired* Digelſtion, and ſo inſtead of being a Pleaſure becomes an Oppreſſion. So that it is but a very *little* while that the Pleaſure of any *outward* Injoyment continues; for till it hath pleaſed us it is not a Pleaſure, and when it hath, it ceaſes to be ſo; and ſo it dies as ſoon as it is born, and its Nativity is only a *Prelude* to its Funeral. Thus all our Injoyments are ſtinted by our Appetites, which are naturally *incapable* of a *continued* Fruition. But then beſides this, our Injoyments are *liable* to a thouſand other Interruptions, which are not in our Power to prevent or avoid; for whether we will or no, we muſt be ſometimes out of Humour, and then all the Pleaſures in the World are moſt *tedious* Impertinencies; and ſometimes we muſt *ſleep*, and then we are *inſenſible* of them; and ſometimes be *ſick*, and then they are as *taſt-leſs* as a Cork; and ſometimes be *griped* with *guilty* Thoughts, and *ill-aboding* Reflections, and then, inſtead of Pleaſures, they are our Horrors and Vexations. Thus our Injoyment, like an Ague, is *full* of Intermiſſions; now we are *pleaſed*, and anon we are *diſpleaſed*, and immediately after the *hot Fit* is over, the *cold One* returns; and thus it would be if we had all the World in our Poſſeſſion. And indeed the Intervals of our Injoyment of theſe *Terreſtrial* Goods are uſually *longer* than the Injoyment it ſelf, and the *hot Fits* of our Pleaſure and Fruition are generally ſooner over, than thoſe *cold Ones* of Diſpleaſure and Diſſatisfaction that ſucceed them. So that if I could command all the Goods in the World, they would be ſo far from yielding me a *continued* Happineſs, that in all Probability the Interruptions of my Happineſs would take up a *greater* Part of my Life than the Injoyment of it; and perhaps for every *one* moment of Fruition, I ſhould ſpend *two* either in Pain, or in Non-perception of Pleaſure. How then is it *poſſible* that ſuch a *broken* and *diſcontinued* Happineſs as this ſhould ever make us amends for thoſe Miſeries that are included in the Loſs of our Souls? For to loſe our Souls is to be *miferable* without any Interruption, to be eternally grieved and tortured without any Intervals of Eaſe or Refreshment. For the State of Perdition is a *continual* Torment ſpun out into an *endleſs* Duration, wherein there are no *Days* of Reſt, nor *Nights* of Sleep, nor *intermediate* Pauſes of Eaſe; where the Fire never ceaſes burning, nor the Worm gnawing, but *Wo* ſucceeds *Wo* without Intermiſſion, and Miſeries, like the *nimble* Minutes of Time, follow Miſeries, and tread cloſe upon *one anothers* Heels. Hence Rev. 20. 10. thoſe that are caſt into this Lake of Perdition, are ſaid to be *tormented Day and Night for ever*; which plainly implies that their Miſeries are all but one *uninterrupted* Torment, or *continued* Succeſſion of *dolorous* Perceptions *for ever*. And if ſo, O *Bleſſed God*! What a *poor* Compensation for it are the *broken* Joys of this World? For if the Miſery of *Hell* were to laſt no longer than the Happineſs of this World, yet if for *one* Week's Happineſs here I were to indure *another* Week's Miſery *there*, I ſhould have a *miferable* Bargain of it; becauſe the Happineſs being ſo *interrupted*, and the Miſery ſo *continued*, I muſt in the ſame ſpace undergo at leaſt *double* the Miſery that I enjoyed Happineſs. And what Man would be contented to live all the *next* Week in a Cauldron of *boyling* Oyl, wherein he knows he ſhall be continually *tormented*, provided he may ſpend *this* Week in an *uninterrupted* Injoyment of the moſt *grateful* Luxuries, which he knows he muſt be as often and as long *inſenſible* as he can be *ſenſible* of?

(thly,

6thly, And Lastly, The *Good* that is in the Gain of this World is *fading* and *transitory*; but the *Evil* that is in the Loss of the Soul is *eternal*. For so *impotent* are all this World's *Goods*, that they cannot insure us of one moment's Injoyment of them. It may be as soon as ever we have filled our Bags and Barns with the Wages of our Iniquity, and have a *plentiful* Provision for many Years Ease and Luxury, we may be snatched away upon the very Brinks of Injoyment, and hurried into a *woful* Eternity, there to consume those Years in Misery and Torment, which we promised to spend in Pleasure and Voluptuousness. This you know was the Case of the *rich Epicure* in the *Gospel*; how did the *jolly* Wretch congratulate and applaud himself in the *golden* Purchase of his Frauds and Oppressions? How did he vaunt of his *own* Prudence, and *good* Conduct, and strut and swell with *munificent* Conceits of the *happy* Condition he was now arrived to, when all of a sudden his *unprepared* Soul was surprized with a Summons to Eternity? And then how *blank* did the *Fool* look upon the *fatal* News, that *that* Night must put an End to all his Hopes and Pleasures, and deprive him of all those *future* Injoyments with which he had promised to recompence all his *past* Toils and Labours? With what Regret and Reluctancy was he dragg'd from the *dear* Purchase of his Sweat and Sin? And in what Agonies of Horror did he groan out his *wretched* Spirit, when instead of injoying the *Goods* he *had laid up for many Years*, he felt himself sinking into a *woful* Eternity, and lie weltring *there* in *unquenchable* Flames, whilst he hoped to have been wallowing *here* in Ease and Voluptuousness? But suppose we should injoy the many Years Ease which this *vain glorious* Fool was disappointed of; alas those Years will quickly expire, and *Threescore and ten*, or *Fourscore* at most, is the *utmost* Period we can hope to arrive to; but then from thence commences an *Eternity* of Misery, which *Millions of Millions* of Ages can neither shrink nor exhaust, and compared with the *longest* Life of Pleasure hath not the Proportion of one *single* moment. So that if in Exchange for our Souls we could purchase a Lease of Life as long as *Methuselah's*, and a Lease of Happiness parallel to that Life, yet in the Conclusion we should find it a most *woful* Bargain; because when both these Leases are expired, as they must at last though it be *long* first, we must remove into a State of *intolerable* Misery, whose Duration will be always equally because it will be always infinitely *distant* from a Period; and when we are there, all that *long* Train of Happiness that is *past* will seem but a Minute's Dream in Comparison of that *Eternity* of Misery that is to come. But, O good God! When for *thirty* or *forty* Years Pleasure upon Earth, I have suffered a *thousand* Years Torment in *Hell*, and after that have *endless Thousands of Thousands* more to suffer, how dearly shall I rue my *own* Folly and Madness, that for the sake of a *few* Moments Pleasure have run my self headlong into such an *endless* Misery. Consider therefore, O my Soul! Within a *little* while all these *outward* Goods which I have purchased by my Sin, will signify no more to me than if they had never been, and all their *alluring* Relishes will be gone and forgotten *for ever*; but then for *Ten thousand* Millions of Ages after I shall be feeling the Smart, and enduring the Stings of them. When all my *ill gotten* Wealth is shrunk into a *Winding-sheet*, and my *vast* Possessions into *six Foot* of Earth, and I have none of its Pumps or Pleasures *left* either to go along with, or to follow after me, then will the Guilt of all stick close to me, and raise a Cry on me as *high* as the Tribunal of God; a Cry that will draw down an *everlasting* Vengeance on my Head, and ring Peals of Thunder in my Conscience *for ever*. Lord! What a *poor* Amends then is the *momentary* Injoyments of the Goods of this World to me, and that after a *few* Years must pass into *another*, and there languish away a *long* Eternity under the *intolerable* Anguish of a *damm'd* Spirit.

And thus you see, upon a *just* Survey of the Gains of this World, and the Loss of a Soul, how infinitely *short* the Happiness of the *one* is to make us any *tolerable* Compensation for the Miseries of the *other*. And if the Gain of all the World be *too little* to countervail this Loss, what *miserable* Losers are the Generality of Men that forfeit their Souls upon a far *less* valuable Consideration? For

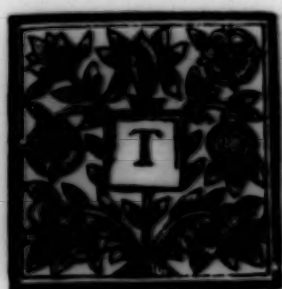
no Man was ever yet, or is ever like to be so *prosperous* in his Sin, as to gain the whole World by it; that is a *Scramble* in which Millions are engaged, and of which every one will be catching a Share. But, alas! For the Generality, the Purchase of Mens Sin is so *small* and *inconsiderable*, that it is scarce a *valuable* Consideration for the Soul of a Rat. For what doth the *common* Swearer get by all his *senseless* and *impertinent* Oaths, which are capable of serving no *other* Purpose but only to stop the Gaps of his Speech, or to man his Rage, and rave, and play the Fool with a little more Gentility? What doth the Drunkard gain by all his Intemperances, but only a *short* Fit of *frantick* Mirth, and *extravagant* Jollity; which, after a *few* Hours, ends in a *sleepless* Night, a *sick*, and *uneasy* Stomach, and a *sottish* Confusion over all his Senses? What doth the *envious* and *malicious* Man get by all his *studied* Mischiefs and Revenges? When he hath pluck'd out his Enemy's Eye, he cannot put it into his own Head, nor can he increase the Stock of his *own* Happiness by diminishing his Adversaries. When he hath made *another* the *worse*, he is never the *better* for it; nor do his Injuries grow *less* by being retaliated: So that he vexes and disquiets himself to no purpose, but to make his Enemy bleed; he keeps his *own* Wound *green*, and consequently multiplies Evils in vain, and prosecutes Mischief only for Mischief's sake. I confess there are some Vices that are not altogether so *unprofitable* as these; in *some* Vices there is a Prospect of *worldly* Gain and Greatness, in *others* of *sensitive* Pleasure and Delight; but alas! When after a *few* Days Injoyment of those Gains and Pleasures, I am called away from them, and transported into a *woful* Eternity, there to expiate the Guilts of them with those *sharp* and *everlasting* Torments I shall be made to endure, how shall I be astonished at my own *desperate* Folly to think what a *mad* Bargain I have made? What an Happiness I have sold to purchase those Gains? What a Misery I have incurred to grasp and enjoy those Pleasures? O! Now what would I give for a *Goal-delivery* from *Hell*, or but for the *least* Mitigation of my Agonies and Torments! If I had all the Wealth that I purchased by my Sin, and ten thousand times more, how willingly would I part with it to bribe my Flames, and corrupt my Tormentors? O! Now I shall wish a thousand and a thousand times that I had rather chosen to famish for want of Bread, than to enjoy those *accursed* Profits and Pleasures that were the Fruits and Wages of mine Iniquities; but now alas! It will be *too late* to Repent. As yet we have the Opportunity to retrieve *our own* Folly, and to revoke and cancel this *our desperate* Bargain, and by *our serious* Repentance and *heartly* Renunciation of the Temptations of this World, we may release our selves from our Covenant with Death, and Agreement with Hell. But if we out-stay our Opportunity a *few* Moments longer, till Death hath put an end to it, the *fatal* Bargain will be sealed past all Revocation.

DISCOURSE XXIII.

UPON,

JOHN i. 14.

And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of his Father) full of Grace and Truth.



THESE Words contain *Three distinct Propositions.*

- I. *The Word was made Flesh.*
- II. *And dwelt among us full of Grace and Truth.*
- III. *And we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of his Father.*

Of each of these I intend to discourse in their Order.

I. The first is, That *the Word was made Flesh.* In handling of which, I shall do these three Things:

1. Shew you what we are here to understand by *The Word.*
2. Why it is called *The Word.*
3. What we are to understand by *The Word's* being made *Flesh.*

1. What is meant by *The Word*? I answer in general, That by *The Word* here we are to understand Christ: For in the following Verse you will find that this *Word* was He of whom *John the Baptist* was the *Forerunner*, and to whom he bare Witness, saying, *This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me, is preferred before me; for he was before me.* And in the other *Evangelists* you will find that it was *Christ* whose *Forerunner* the *Baptist* was, and to whom he gave this Testimony, as you may see at your leisure, *Matth. 3. 11. Mark 1. 7. Luke 3. 16.* where you find *John Baptist* giving the same Testimony to *Christ* which here he gives to *the Word*, especially v. 27. of this Chapter. Which is a plain Evidence that *Christ* and the *Word* are only *different* Titles of the *same Person.* But that I may more particularly explain to you the Meaning of this Phrase, I will briefly deliver my Sense of it in these following Propositions:

1. That this Phrase, *the Word*, as it is by way of *Eminence* applied to a particular Subject, is derived into the *New Testament* from the *Theology* of the *Jews* and *Gentiles.*

2. That the *New Testament* giving no distinct Explication of it, it is most safe and reasonable to fetch the Sense of it from that *ancient Theology* whence it was derived.

3. That the *Theology* from whence it was derived, uses it to signify a *vital* and *Divine Subsistence.*

4. That therefore our *Saviour*, to whom it is applied in the *New Testament*, is that *vital* and *Divine Subsistence.*

1. That this Phrase, *The Word*, as it is by way of *Eminency* applied to a particular Subject, is derived into the *New Testament* from the *Theology* of the *Jews* and *Gentiles.* Which will plainly appear to any one that shall consider the exact Agreement between those Titles and Characters which are given to our *Saviour* in the *New Testament*, and those which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* give to the *Word*, so

often mentioned in their *Theology*. For as for this Phrase $\alpha\lambda\gamma\theta$, *The Word*, it is very anciently used in the Writings both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*. For Rab. *Azariel* in his Treatise of Holiness, quotes it out of the *Book of the Creation*, which was written by Rab. *Abraham* an ancient *Cabalist*, who the *Jews* say was the *Patriarch Abraham* himself. *The Spirit*, saith he, meaning the most High God, *bringeth forth the Word and the Voice, and these Three are one God*. Thus also it is frequently used in the *Chaldee Paraphrase* as eminently appropriated to a *Divine Person*: So in *Isa.* 45. 17. instead of *Israel shall be saved in the Lord*, they read it, *by the Word of the Lord*; and *Jerem.* 1. 8. instead of *I am with thee*, they read, *because my Word is with thee*: And *Gen.* 15. 1. instead of *I am thy shield*, they read, *my Word is thy shield*; and so in sundry other Places. And, which is very observable, *Psal.* 110. 1. instead of *The Lord said unto my Lord*, they read, *The Lord said unto his Word*; which Words our *Saviour* applies to himself, *Matth.* 22. 44. as being himself that *Eternal Word*, or $\alpha\lambda\gamma\theta$, there mentioned. And in the same Sense also it was very anciently used in the Wri-

* Tertull. Apologet. c. 36. Pam. Hunc (i. e. λόγον) Zeno determinat factitorem qui cuncta in dispositione founaverit, eundemq; & fitum vocari & Deum & animum Jovis.

607. Εἰς τὸ λόγον θεῶν
 βλέψας, τῷ πρὸς
 εἰς ἑαυτοῦ, Ἐυδύων κρα-
 τὴς νοεῖν κύτος δὲ
 ἐπὶ αἵματι Ἀτραπτῇ μῦ-
 τον δὲ ἐσὶν αἰσθητὸν ἄ-
 νθρωπον ἡ δὲ αἰσθητὸν.

† *Epinoënis*.

cap 7. Thus as St. Paul calls him the *King immortal*, so Orpheus in the afore-named Place calls him *ἀνακτα ἀθάνατον*, the *King immortal*. And whereas Christ is said to be the *Image of God*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. to be the *shining forth of his Glory*, and the express *Character of his Person*, Heb. 1. 3. Philo calls him *ζαχαρίας θεῶ**, the *οὐκ* and *οὐκὸν θεῶ*||; that is, the *Character of God*, and the *Shadow and Image of God*: And Plotin, That it is a *Light streaming forth from God*, even as *Brightness doth from the Sun*†. And as St. John in the first Verse of this Chapter tells us, That the *Word was from the beginning with God*, and that it was *God*; so Philo tells us, that by *Prerogative of Eldership* he *abideth with the Father*, and *Zeno*, in the afore-named Place, that *he is God*; and Plotin *

* Ibid.

* Lib. 2. de Agricultura p. 169. Edit. Genev. 1617.

|| Leg. Alleg. l. 2.
p. 60.

† Enn. 5. 1. 1. c. 6.

* Ibid.

* Philo de Opif.
mundi. p. 4, 5.

inf. fol. p. 137.

† Leg. Alleg. l. 2.
p. 70, & 71.

** De Migrat. A-
brah. p. 304.

* Leg. Alleg. p. 71.

the High Priest over the House of God, Heb. 10. 21. Philo tells us, that the

World is the Temple of God. *ἐν ᾧ ὁ ἀρχαῖος ὁ ἀρχαῖος αὐτῷ θεῷ λόγος**; that is, in which the First-born Divine Word is the High Priest. Whereas Christ is said to be the Son of God, and the First-born of every Creature; Plato calls him, the begotten Son of the Good; Plotin, the Son of God†; and Philo, the First-begotten Son and Word of God**. Again, whereas God is said to have created the World by Christ, *Heb. 1. 2*, and to have committed the Government of it to him; Philo calls the *θεῷ λόγος*, the *ἐκδοτικὸς* *καὶ κυβερνῆτης τῆς παύσης**; that is, the Governour of all things, and the *ὕπαρχος θεῷ*||, the Vice-roy of God; and also *ὄργανον θεῷ δι τὸ ποιεῖν καὶ κατασκευάζειν*†; that is, the Instrument of God by whom he made the World. As in Christ the Fulness of the Godhead is said to dwell, *Colos. 2. 9*. so Plotin tells us of the *νῦς*, or *λόγος*, that it is filled with God**. As Christ is called the great Shepherd of our Souls, *1 Pet. 2. 25*. so Philo tells us, that God, who is King and Pastor of the World, hath appointed the Word his first-begotten Son, *τὸν ἀρχαῖον καὶ ἱερεὺς ἀγίων* *ἐκείνου βασιλέως ὑπαρχὸν διακονῶν**, to undertake the Care of his sacred Flock, as his own Vice-roy and Substitute: And accordingly in the same place he makes The Word to be that Angel whom God had promised to send before the Camp of Israel to conduct them through the Wilderness. In short, as the Angels are said to be subject unto Christ, *1 Pet. 3. 22*. and as Christ is said to be the Angel or Messenger of God, *John 9. 4*. so Philo calls the most ancient Word the *ἀρχαῖος**; that is, the Prince of the Angels, and the *τὸν ἀγγελὸν θεῷ*||; the Angel or Messenger of God. And, to name no more, as Christ is called the Mediator of the new Covenant, *Heb. 12. 24*. and the Intercessor between God and Man, *Heb. 7. 25*. and the Propitiation and Atonement: So saith Philo, (which is highly worthy of our Observation) the Word *ἵνα τις μὲν ἴσῃ, &c.** is the Intercessor for Mortals with the immortal God, and also the Ambassador of that great King to his Subjects; which Office, saith he, he willingly undertook, saying, *I will stand in the middle between the Lord and you, as being neither unborn as God, nor born as you; but being a Medium between those two Extreams, I will be a Pledge for both; for his Creatures, that they shall not utterly apostatize from him; for God, that he will not be wanting in his Fatherly Care towards them.* And in another place he tells us, that the *θεῷ λόγος* is *ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος**; that is, the Beginning and the End of God's good will to the World; which is all one with Propitiation.

* De Somniis, p.

47. De Repub. l. 6.

† Enn. 5. l. 8. c. 12.

** De Somn. p. 463.

* De Cherub. p. 88.

|| De Somn. p. 466.

† Lib. Cherub. p.

100.

** Ennead. 5. l. 3. c. 12.

* De Agricult. p.

152.

* Quæst Rerum divin. hæc. p. 397.

|| De Somn. p. 466.

* Quæst Rerum divin. hæc. p. 397.

* De Somniis, p.

447.

And these Authorities of Philo I have the rather insisted upon, because he being a Jew, and a Platonick Philosopher, must needs understand the Theology of Jews and Gentiles; and living about the Time of our Saviour, he must be supposed to have written in Terms that were then in use, and were very well understood both by Jews and Gentiles: And if so, then it must necessarily follow, that this Phrase, *The Word*, so common in that Author, was very commonly used both by Jews and Gentiles in our Saviour's Time, and consequently that it was derived from them, and so appropriated to our Saviour by the inspired Writers of the New Testament. And indeed it is not to be imagined how those inspired Writers should ever have so exactly agreed with the Jews and Gentiles in the Titles and Characters of the *Eternal Word*, had not either they themselves, or the Spirit of God, which dictated to them, purposely derived it from them.

2. That the New Testament giving no distinct Explication of this Phrase, *The Word*, it is most safe and reasonable to fetch the Sense of it from that ancient Theology whence it was derived. I do not deny but it is usual with all Writers to use Terms and Phrases by way of Accommodation, and to illustrate their Sense by alluding to something that is like it; and therefore are not always to be understood in the Sense which those Terms and Phrases do most commonly signify, but in a Sense that hath some Proportion with it, as the Drift and Connection of

their Discourse doth plainly intimate. But when Writers use Words in a *literal* Sense, without any Note of Allusion, and without explaining themselves into any *different* Sense, either they must mean the *same* Thing which those Words do commonly signify, or else they must mean to deceive and impose upon their Readers. And thus stands the Case before us; our *Saviour* is here stiled *The Word*, a *Term of Art* which was very *common* both in the *Jewish* and *Gentile Philosophy*; and neither here, nor any where else, is there the *least* Intimation that he is called so, only by way of Allusion; nor is it in all the *New Testament* explained into any *other* Sense than that wherein it was commonly used; and therefore the Intent of the *Sacred Writers* in using it must be either to denote the *same* thing which it signified before, or to deceive and impose upon the World. But doubtless if the *Holy Spirit*, which inspired those writers, had meant any thing else by it than what it ordinarily signifies, he would have told us of it, and not have given us such an *unavoidable* Occasion to mistake in so *great* a Doctrine, by clothing its Sense in such a *Phrase* as generally signifies what he never meant. For when he called *Christ* by the *same* Name, and attributed the *same* Titles and Characters by which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* were wont to describe their *ΛΟΓΟΣ*, he could not but foresee that all *inquisitive* Persons would be apt to conclude that he meant the *same* thing; and therefore if he had not meant so, he would doubtless either not have given him that Name, and those Titles, or else, to prevent our being imposed upon by them, he would have explained them into some other meaning; which since he hath not done, we may safely and rationally conclude, that he hath meant the *same* thing by this Name, and those Titles with those from whom he did derive them; and consequently that the most *certain* way for us to understand what is the Sense of *Christ's* being *The Word*, is to consider what those *Jews* and *Gentiles* meant by it, from whose *Philosophy* it was first borrowed and derived.

3. That both the *Jewish* and *Gentile Theology* used this Phrase, *The Word*, to signify a *Vital* and *Divine Subsistence*. For as for the *Jews*, it's plain that by *The Word* they meant the *Messias*; and therefore, *Psal.* 110. which they say contains the Mysteries of the *Messias*, the *Chaldee Paraphrase*, instead of *the Lord said unto my Lord*, read *the Lord said unto his Word*, that is consequently to his *Messias*. And Rab. Arama upon *Genesis*, explaining that Passage in the 107. *Psal.* 20. *The Lord sent forth his Word, and they were healed*; expressly tells us, that by this *Word* is meant the *Messias*. And Rab Simeon the Son of *Johni* expounding those words of *Job* 19. 26. *Yet in my Flesh shall I see God*, saith, that the Mercy which proceeds from the *highest* Wisdom of *God*, shall be Crowned by *The Word*, and take *Flesh* of a Woman; by which it's plain that by *The Word* he understood the *Messias*. And that by the *Messias* they understood a *Divine Subsistence*, is evident from sundry Places in the *Chaldee Paraphrase*; which often applies the Name *Jehovah* to the *Messias*; which according to the Opinion of the *Jews*, ought not to be imparted to any Creature; as particularly, *Isa.* 28. 5. *Jehovah Sabaoth* (for so it is in the *Hebrew*) *shall be a Crown of Glory unto the residue of his People*; which those Interpreters understand concerning the *Messias*. So also *Isa.* 18. 7. *In that time shall the Present be brought unto the Lord of Hosts*; that is, say they, unto the *Messias*. So also, *Jerem.* 33. 16. By *Jehovah our Righteousness*, they understand the *Messias*; and by the Name of the *Everlasting*, *Moses Hadersan* understands the Name of the *Messias*, or *Anointed King*. And certainly had they not believed the *Messias* to be a *Divine Subsistence*, they would never have attributed to him this *incommunicable* Name of *God*; of which they had so *high* a Veneration, that they thought it *too* sacred for any Creature to name, and much more to assume. And the *Commentary* upon the fourth *Psalms* expressly saith, *Because the Gentiles cease not to ask us, Where is our God; the time will come that God will sit among the Righteous, so as they shall be able to point him out with the Finger*; which plainly refers to the Coming of the *Messias*. And so also the *Septuagint* change *Shaddai*, the *undoubted* Name of the *Omnipotent God*, into *ΛΟΓΟΣ*, *The Word*, *Ezek.* 1. 24. where, instead of *the Voice of God*, (as it is in the *Hebrew*) they read *ὁ λόγος*, *the Voice of the Word of God*. And so also the *afore-named Paraphrase*, as

I have already hinted, doth often use the *Word of God* for *God* himself, and that more especially with relation to the Creation of the World. Thus instead of *I made the Earth*, Isa 45. 12. they read it, *I by my Word made the Earth*: And instead of *God made Man*, Gen. 1. 27. the *Jerusalem Targum* reads, *And the Word of the Lord made Man*: And instead of *They heard the Voice of the Lord*, Gen. 3. 8. the *Paraphrase* reads it, *And they heard the Voice of the Word of the Lord God*. And *Philo* expressly calls this *Word* the *Δευτερον Θεον*, or *Second God* next to the *πρῶτον Θεον*.

And as the *Jews* believed *The Word* to be a *Divine Subsistence*, so did the *Gentiles* also. For so *Numenius the Pythagorean*, as he is quoted by *St. Cyril**, calls the *Father* the *First*, and the *Word* the *Second God*; and *Plotin* tells us||, *that this Word, or Image of God, beholdeth God, and is inseparably joined with him*; and *Porphyry*, as he is cited by the fore-named *Father*†, tells us, that the *Essence of God extends to Three In-beings*, viz. the highest *Good*, which is the *Father*, and the *Maker of all things*, which is the *Word*, and the *Soul of the World*; and these he also calls the *First*, and *Second*, and *Third God*. And of *Pythagoras Proclus the Platonist* affirms, that he commended *Three Gods together in ONE*, (even as *Plato* also doth) the *Second* of which was the *Word* or *Wisdom*, whereunto he attributes the Creation of the World. And *Plato*, in his 6th *Epistle*, so far owns the *Divinity* of the *Word*, that he earnestly exhorts his *Friends* that they should *ἐπονομαζέωσιν τὸν τῶν πάντων Θεὸν ἡγεμόνα τῶνδε ὄντων καὶ τῶν μελλόντων, οὕτε ἡγεμόνα καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν πρῶτα λέγουσιν*; that is, *invoke God the Governour of all things that are and shall be, and also the Lord and Father of that Prince and Governour*; by the first of which he evidently means *The Word*, since 'tis to the *Word* that he elsewhere* attributes the Government of the *Stars and Heavenly Bodies*. By all which it is apparent, that by *The Word* they understood some *Divine Subsistence*, whose Nature is exalted above all *finite Beings* whatsoever; and therefore,

*Cyril cont. Julian.

l. 8.

|| Enn. 5. l. v. c. 6.

† Cyril. ibid. l. 1.

* Plat. Epinom.

4. And lastly, Our *Saviour*, to whom this Phrase *The Word* is applied, must be that *Divine Person* or *Subsistence*. And so we find him stiled in the first Verse of this Chapter: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*. Which Expressions are so exactly agreeable to the Phrase of the *Gentile Theology*, that *Amelius*, the Disciple of *Plotin*, and a great Enemy to the *Christians*, was forced to acknowledge that this is that *Word* which was from *Everlasting*, and by whom all things were made, as *Heraclitus* supposed: And, per *Jovem*, saith he, *Barbarus iste*, meaning *St. John*, cum nostro Platone consentit, *Verbum Dei in Ordine Principii esse**. This *Barbarian* is of our *Plato's Mind*, that the *Word of God* is ranked among the *Principles*. And indeed, unless we understand this Place of the *Eternal Deity of The Word*, I know not how it will be possible to make any tolerable Sense of it; for if by *In the Beginning* here, we understand, as the *Socinians* would have us, in the *beginning of the Gospel*, when *John Baptist* began to Preach, the Words will imply a gross *Tautology*, and the Sense of them must be this; that *Christ* was when *John Baptist* preached that he was; or which is all one, that he was when he was. For how can it be worthy of an *Apostle* so solemnly to assert, that *the Word* had a *Being* in the *Beginning of the Gospel*, when we know the *Baptist* taught as much himself: who therefore came baptizing with water, that he should be made manifest to *Israel*, John 1. 31. And when *St. Matthew* and *St. Luke*, who wrought before, taught us more than this, viz. That he was in *Being* thirty Years before, when we are sure it was as true of any other then living as of *the Word*, even of *Judas* that betrayed him, and *Pilate* who condemned him. By *in the beginning*, therefore must be meant the *Beginning of the World*; and that even then, *the Word was with God, and the Word was God*. So *Phil. 2. 6, 7*. *Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of Men*. From whence these three Conclusions do

* St. Austin. De Civ. Dei. l. 10.

most

most naturally result ; *First*, That *Christ* was in the form of a *Servant* as soon as he was made Man : *Secondly*, That he was in the form of *God* before he was in the form of a *Servant* : And, *Thirdly*, That he was in the form of *God* ; that is, did as really and truly subsist in the *Divine Nature*, as in the form of a *Servant*, or in the Nature of Man. For the Words literally translated run thus ; But emptied himself, taking the Form of a *Servant*, being in the Likeness of Men : Which plainly implies, that *Christ* was full before he emptied himself, that he emptied himself by taking the form of a *Servant*, that he took the form of a *Servant* by being made in the likeness of Men ; which *Emptying* presupposes a *precedent Plenitude*, and which *Plenitude* consisted in being so in the form of *God* as to think it no *Robbery* to be equal with *God*. So *Rev. 1. 11.* he solemnly proclaims his own Divinity ; *I am Alpha and Omega the first and the last*, which is the *incommunicable* Title by which *God* describes his own Being, and distinguishes it from all others. And *Isa. 44. 6.* *I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God.* These and many other plain Assertions there are in the *New Testament*, of the *Eternal Deity* of the *Blessed Word*. But since the *Eternal God* was constantly, both by the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, signified by this Phrase *the Word*, there is no Reason to imagine that *St. John* should make use of it, in any other Notion ; since in so doing he would have imposed upon the World, and taken an *effectual* Course to make us believe that he meant what he never intended.

And so I have done with the *first* thing proposed, which was to shew you what is here meant by *Christ's* being *the Word* ; the Design of which, you see, is to express his *Eternal Godhead* and *Divinity*.

2. I now proceed to the *next* Thing proposed, which was to shew you for what Reason it is that he is here called *The Word* : In answer whereunto, it is to be considered, that the Word $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ hath a *twofold* Signification : *First*, It signifies *Reason*, which is the inferring one thing from another, and this is the Birth and Offspring of the Mind. *Secondly*, It signifies *Speech*, which is an *audible* Expression of our Thoughts and Reasonings, and this is the Image and Interpreter of our Minds ; and it is also the *Executer* of the Mind, especially in those who are in *Sovereign* Authority, and do Rule by their Word and Command. Now our *Blessed Saviour* is called *the Word* upon both these Accounts ; both as he is the *Reason*, and the *Speech* of *God* ; and accordingly his being *the Word* denotes these four Things :

- 1st, His being generated of the Mind of the Father.
- 2^{dly}, His being the perfect Image of that Mind.
- 3^{dly}, His being the Interpreter of his Father's Mind to us.
- 4^{thly}, His being the Executer of his Father's Mind.

1st, His being generated of the Mind of the Father, even as our *Word* or *Reason* is the Issue and Offspring of our Minds. For it was the Opinion both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that the *Eternal Word* is nothing else but that most perfect *No-tion*, *Idea*, and *Conception* which *God* from the Beginning had formed of himself, and all other Beings in his own Mind. For thus the *Jews* tell us, that every thing *below* hath some Root above ; which Root, say they, are the *Sephiroth*, or Seals by which all these *inferiour* Substances are stamp'd and shap'd, and fashion'd ; and these Seals, they tell us, are those most perfect *Ideas* of things which *God* did form in his own Mind, according to which he fashioned all the Beings that are in the World. For, say they *, all the Three Worlds, that is, the *Rational*, *Sensitive*, and *Inanimate*, were printed with the *Print*, and sealed with the same Seal ; (that is, that great Seal in the Mind of *God*, consisting of the *Ideas* of all things) and that which is sealed, and receiveth the Sealing here below, is like to the Shape and Form of those things above, which did seal and stamp the Signature upon them. And these three Worlds, say they, being one below another, *God* set upon them the Seal of *Sephiroth* so hard that he printed them quite through the Bottom of them ; that

* Vide Dr. Cudworth of the Union of *Christ* and the Church.

that is, he stamp'd them all into an exact Resemblance to those *Ideas* which he had formed of them in his own Mind. So that according to them, before God made the World he framed the *Idea* and *Model* of it in his own Understanding, which, together with that *Idea* or Notion which from all *Eternity* he conceived of himself, they called the ΛΟΓΟΣ, or *Eternal Word* of God. Hence *Philo* calls the *Word* of God, the εἰς αὐτὸν θεῶν, and also the σφραγίδα *, and the ἀρχή των πραγμάτων, and the ἰδέα των ἰδεῶν || : And tells us, that as a City before it was made, existed only in the Mind of the Builder ; so the World had no other Place, ἢ τὸν θεῶν λόγον τὸν ταῦτα διακοσμοῦντα ; that is, than the *Divine Word* that made it. And afterwards he tells us, that the *intellectual World*, that is, the World which contains the *Ideas* of all things, ἔστιν ἕτερον ἐστὶν ἢ τοῦ λόγου ἡδὲ κοσμοποιήσαντος *, is nothing else but the *Word* of God now making the World. And accordingly the Jews call *The Word* the *Wisdom* of God, and tell us ||, that *this Wisdom* is of the most inward Understanding of God, who beholds himself in himself. From all which it is apparent, that the Jews attributed the Original of this *Divine Word* to the *Mind* of the Father, it being, according to their *Divinity*, nothing else but that most perfect Conception and *Idea* which God from *Everlasting* formed of himself, and all other Beings, in his own Mind. In which Opinion the most *Divine Philosophers* of the *Gentiles* also do most exactly consent. And hence they generally call *The Word* the νοῦς, or *Understanding* of the Father, he being the perfect *Idea* or *Conception* by which the Father understands himself and all other things. And accordingly *Alcinous* tells us *, that both *Socrates* and *Plato* taught that God is a *Mind*, and that in the same there is a certain *Idea* which in respect of God, is that *Knowledge* which God hath of himself, and in respect of the World, is the *Pattern* or *Mould* thereof, and in respect of it self, is very *Essence*. And *Plotin* tell us *, that God is both the Party that is conceived in the *Mind* or *Understanding*, and also the Party that conceives him ; and he makes *The Word* to be that which God doth mind in himself, which is *Himself*, and his own immense Perfections ; and that the Nature of that *Idea* of himself which he beholds in himself, is an Act that issues from him, which consists in beholding and minding of himself, and in beholding him becomes the self same thing with him. And this *Understanding* or *Knowledge* which God hath of himself, he calls *, the *Son* of the *Sovereign Father*, that bears the like Resemblance to him as the *Light* doth to the *Sun* in the *Firmament*. And, to name no more, *Porphyry*, as he is quoted by *St. Cyril*, tells us, That it was the *Doctrine* of *Plato*, that of the *Good*, (which elsewhere he calls the *Father*) is begotten an *Understanding* in a manner unknown to Men, in which are all things that truly are, and the *Essences* of all that have a Being ; that is, the substantial *Ideas* of God, and all created things whatsoever. And upon this Account it is, that they call this *Divine Subsistence The Word*, because it was generated by the *Mind* of the Father, even as our Words are generated by our Minds. And accordingly the ancient Jews, and *Christian Fathers*, do generally expound that great *Elogium* of *Wisdom*, *Prov. 8.* concerning the *Eternal Word* ; where it is said, that *Wisdom* was set up from everlasting, and possessed by God in the beginning of his way ; that it was brought forth by him before the World ; and that when he appointed the Foundations of the Earth, then was it by him, as one brought up with him, and was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, v. 22.--31. And this Notion the *New Testament* doth plainly refer to, when it calls *Christ* the *Wisdom* of God, 1 Cor. 1. 24. which is the same Title that both Jews and *Platonists* give to *The Word* upon the account of his being that *Eternal Knowledge* and *Understanding* which God hath of himself and all other Beings ; and in this, John 1. 4. the *Apostle* seems plainly to hint this Notion to us ; for speaking there of *The Word*, In him, saith he, was *Life*, and the *Life* was the *Light* of Men. Now I think it will be hard to give any natural Account how that *Life* that was in *The Word* should enlighten Men, unless we suppose

* De Mundi Opif.

P. 5.
|| Ibid. p. 3.

* Ibid. p. 4.

|| Rab. Isaac Ben Schola on the last Verses of the 111. and 112. Psalms.

* Alcin de Doctrinā Platonis.

* Plot Enn. 5. l. 6. c. 1.

* Enn. 5. l. 8. c. 12. & Enn. 5. l. 1. c. 7.

suppose his very *Life* and *Being* to consist in *Knowledge* and *Understanding*; for by the *Light of Men* here is plainly meant that *Divine Knowledge* which is revealed to the World by *Christ*; and this *Divine Knowledge* he tells us is the very *Life of The Word*, or the *Life* that was in *The Word*: And afterwards he expressly calls *The Word the Light* it self, from whence all our Knowledge of *God* and Goodness is derived, v. 9. which is exactly the same with what *Philo* saith of *The Word*, viz. that *He is the Intellectual Sun that is altogether Light*; and with

* Enn. 5. l. 1.

what *Plotin* saith of the *νῆς*, or *Divine Mind*, * that he is a *Light shed forth every where, streaming from God, and begotten*

of him. Which is a plain Evidence of *Christ's* being the *substantial Light, Knowledge, or Idea* of all things which *God* from *Everlasting* formed in his own *Mind*, and of his being therefore called *the Word of God*, because he is the *Offspring* of *God's Understanding*, even as our *Reason* is the *Offspring* of ours.

2dly, He is called *The Word of God*, because he is the *perfect Image of God*, even as the *Word* is the *Image of the Mind*: For thus, as I have already told you, the *Eternal Word* is very frequently called the *Image of God* both by the *Jews* and *Gentiles*. For so *Plotin**, that *this Divine Under-*

* Enn. 5. l. 1. c. 6.

|| Ibid. l. 2.

† Plato de Repub. l. 6. p. 478.

standing being the very *Word of God, and Image of God, everlastingly beholds God, and cannot be separated from him*; and

|| that it is the *begotten Issue, Word, and Image of the Sovereign God*. And *Plato* himself calls him † the *begotten Son of the*

Good, and most like unto him in all things; the *ἐκγονὸν τῷ ἀγαθῷ καὶ ὁμοιωτάτω ἐκείνῳ*, and afterwards, † *τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐκγονόν οὐ παρὰ δὲν ἐγγίνεσκον ἀνέλογον ἐαυτῷ*; that is, *the begotten Son of the Good, who is most like unto himself*. And *Rab. Moses the Son of Neheman*, as he is quoted by *Masius*, proving it: that *Angel of God's Presence* which went before the *Camp of Israel* was the *Messias* or *Eternal Word*, tells us, that he is therefore called the *Angel of God's Presence*, nimirum quia ille Angelus est facies Dei; because he is the *Face of God, in whom God's Face was to be seen*. And so *Philo*

* Philo Legis Al- leg. l. 2. p. 60.

the *Jew* also doth very frequently call *The Word**, the *Image and Resemblance of God*, and the *ἀπεικόνισμα*, the *most perfect and exact Representation of God*. For they suppose that *God* being

Omniscient he must necessarily know himself, and that knowing himself, necessarily he must act *ad extremum Virium*, to the utmost of his Power, even as all other necessary Agents do; that acting to the utmost of his Power, he must by knowing himself produce as perfect an *Image, Idea, or Notion* of himself in his own Understanding as it was possible for him to do; that it was possible for him to produce such a *vital and substantial Idea* of himself as is vested with all the *infinite Perfections* of his Nature; and consequently that such an *Idea* he hath produced, and that this *Idea* is the *Eternal Word*. For *God* can do whatsoever doth not imply a Contradiction; now there is nothing in *God* but what he can communicate without a Contradiction, but only *Self-Existence*; that implies a Contradiction indeed, for *God* to cause another thing to be without any Cause, and to exist of it self. But as for all his other Perfections he may communicate them; and when he acts necessarily, as he is supposed to do in the Generation of *the Word*, he must, because then he acts to his utmost Possibility. So then *The Word* must have the same *Nature, Essence, and Perfections* with the *Father*; and the only imaginable Difference between them must be this; that whereas the *Father* exists of himself, *the Word* exists of the *Father*; which is exactly agreeable to the *Catholick Notion of Christians*. And indeed if it be granted that *God*, who is infinitely knowing, must necessarily know himself perfectly, then it will seem to follow, that there must be the same Perfections in that *Idea* or *Notion* by which he knows *Himself*, that there are in himself; for else it is not one perfect *Idea* of him. And hence it is that our *Notions* do so imperfectly resemble things, because we cannot communicate to them that *Life* and *Substance* that is in the things themselves; and therefore if *God* knows himself perfectly, as he must needs do being infinitely knowing, he must communicate *Life* and *Substance* to the *Notion* of himself, or else 'twill be no perfect *Notion* of his *Life* and *Sub-*

stance;

stance; and he must communicate to it all the *immense* Perfections of his own Nature, or else 'twill be no *perfect* Notion of his own Perfections. So then the *Eternal Word*, which is here supposed to be the most *perfect* Notion of the *Father*, must be a *vital* and *substantial Idea*, endued with all the Perfections of the *Divine Nature*, which is also very agreeable with the *Christian* Notion of the *Divine Word*: For he is described to be the *Image of God*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. *the Brightness of his Glory*, and the *express Character of his Person*, Heb. 1. 3. and being so he must necessarily be what *God* is, i. e. *God essential*, or else he cannot be the *perfect Image*, and *express Character of God*. And accordingly in the *New Testament* he is called *God over all, blessed for ever*, Rom. 9. 5. and the Perfections of the *Divine Nature* are very frequently attributed to him, as particularly *Omniscience*, John 16. 30. *Eternity*, Heb. 1. 12. and Rev. 22. 13. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last*. So that upon this account also he may very properly be called *The Word of God*, because as our Words are the Images of our Minds, so *He* is the most *perfect Image of God*.

3dly, He is called *The Word*, because he is the *Interpreter* of the *Father's Mind*, even as our Words also are the *Interpreters* of our Minds to others. And this *Philo the Jew* doth also take notice of as the *proper Work and Office of The Word* to be *πρεσβυσις τῷ ἡγεμῶνι πρὸς τὸ ὑπάρχον **, the *Embassador of the Great King to his Subjects, to communicate his Mind and Will to them*; and also the *Angel and Messenger of God to Men, to declare his Will and Pleasure to them*: And that in the Execution of this Office he doth *τοῖς μὲν ὡς βασιλεὺς ἀρχὴν περὶ τὸ ἐκτελέειν ἐξ ἐπιτάγματος περὶ γέλλειν, &c. **

*Quis rer. div. har.
p. 397.

* De Somn. p. 461.

Some as a *King* he commands what they shall do, others as a *School-Master* he profitably instructs, others as a *Counsellor* he faithfully admonishes; all which he performs as the *Interpreter of the Mind of God*. And elsewhere he calls him the *θεοπαιδὴς ἡλιος* ||, the *Divine Sun that enlightens the Souls of Men*; and elsewhere he expressly calls him the *Interpreter of the Mind of God to Men*: So that it seems it was upon this Account as well as others, that He was called by the *Ancients, The Word of God*.

|| De Charitate, p. 552.

And the same Account is given of it in the *New Testament*. So John 1. 18. *No Man hath seen God at anytime; the only begotten Son, which is in the Bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*. Where there is a particular Reason assigned, why though other Men interpreted the Mind of God to us, yet *Christ* alone is called *The Word of God*; because he only was the *immediate Interpreter of the Divine Will*, even as the Word which we speak is of ours. For he was in the very Bosom of the Father, and there understood his Mind, not by the Instructions of an *Angel*, nor by *Dreams and Visions*, nor only by the *Holy Ghost*, but by an *immediate Intuition of his Thoughts and Purposes* which from all *Eternity* were exposed to his View and Prospect. For as *St. Gregory Nazianzen* hath observed, He had the same Relation to the Father, as the *inward Thought* hath to the Mind, because of his *intimate Conjunction* with him, and Power to declare him to the World. For the *Father* is known by the *Son*, who is a *brief and easy Demonstration of the Father*, as every thing that is begotten is *σιωπῶν λόγος*, the *silent Word of that which doth beget it*.

4thly, And lastly. He is called *The Word*, because he is the *Executer* of his Father's Will, even as the Word and Command of a King is the *Executer* of his Will and Pleasure: For according to the Sense of the *Ancients*, God hath from the very Beginning governed the World by his *eternal λόγος*, whom they therefore call the *Immortal King, the Governour of all things that are or shall be*, and the *Vice-Roy of the great God*, as I have already shewed you at large. And 'twas by this *Word* that God executed his Will when he made the World; For by his *Word* he made the *Heavens*, and all the *Host of them, by the Breath of his Mouth*, Psalm 33. 6. He did but say the Word, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*; and to his *powerful and efficacious Fiat* the whole Frame of Nature was but a *real Eccho*. For these Expressions, *Let there be Light, and let there be a Firmament, &c.* are not perhaps so to be understood as if God did actually pronounce

those Syllables, but they rather seem to be a popular Description of the infinite Energy of the *Eternal Word* by which God made the *Heavens* and the *Earth*, to whom it was as easy to give Being to the World as it was to command it to be; and that Passage of the Psalmist, *by the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made*; and of the Author to the Hebrews, *Heb. 11. 3. that the Worlds were framed by the Word of God*, seem rather to denote that powerful Act of Creation which was exerted by the vital and substantial Word of God, whereby he instantly, and as it were with a Words speaking, gave Existence to those Beings he intended to create, than any articulate Words or Phrases pronounced by God himself; because in this Chapter, and many other Places of the *New Testament*, it is expressly said, that God made the World by *Christ*, who is that living and substantial Word that was with God from the Beginning. Well therefore may *Christ* be called *The Word of God*, since by him God doth as effectually execute his Will, as if it were done by the Word of his own Mouth. For *Christ* hath such Power both in *Heaven* and *Earth*, that at his Word and Command all things are presently done according to his Will; and therefore you may observe in that *Vision* to St. John, *Rev. 19. 13. Jesus*, being represented as the *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, clothed in a royal Purple Robe, is called by the name of *the Word of God*, when he was executing the Divine Vengeance upon the Nations by that Power which he hath at God's Right-hand.

3. I now pass on to the third and last Thing, namely, what we are to understand by *the Word's being made Flesh*, of which I shall give you a brief Account, and then conclude with a few short Inferences from the whole. Which Words, *being made Flesh*, we ought not so to understand as if the *Eternal Word* was changed or converted into *Flesh*, as *Cerintus* taught; or as if the *Flesh* was changed or converted into *the Word*, as *Valentinus* ridiculously asserted; for the *Deity* is immutable, and as it can be changed into nothing, to nothing can be changed into it. But by *Flesh* we are to understand *Man*, a Part being put for the whole; for so the Scripture doth very frequently call *Man Flesh*, that being one of the Ingredients of his Nature. Thus *Psal. 56. 4. I will not fear what flesh can do unto me*; *Jerem. 17. 5. Cursed be the Man that maketh flesh his arm*; that is, that puts his Confidence in Man: *Matth. 24. 22. Except those days be shortened no flesh shall be saved*; that is, no Man: And *Rom. 3. 20. No flesh shall be justified in his sight*; that is, no Man shall be justified. So here, *The Word was made flesh*; that is, *The Word was made Man*. Not that the *Divine Nature* was converted into the Nature of Man, but the Meaning is, it was made one with Man, even as our Soul is not turned into, nor confounded with the Body, yet they two, though distinct in Natures, grow into one Man; so the *Manhood* of *Christ* was assumed, or taken into *The Word*, both being united into one Person, the Natures being preserved entire and distinct, without any Mixture or Confusion. For as the *Fourth General Council* hath defined it, *He was so made Flesh that he ceased not to be the Word, never changing that he was, but assuming that which he was not*. And though our *Humanity* was advanced by it, yet his *Divinity* was not at all diminished; and the Mystery of Godliness, *God manifested in the flesh*, was no Detriment to the Godhead, which is always unchangeably the same: And therefore the seeming Harshness of this Expression may be easily mollified by comparing it with others of the same import; for elsewhere it is said, that *he was manifest in the flesh*, *1 Tim. 3. 16.* which only denotes that the *Divinity* was made known, and did appear in the World in a *Humane Nature*. Elsewhere it is said, that *he took on him the Nature of Man*, *Heb. 2. 16.* which only denotes that the *Divinity* did assume the *Humane Nature* to it, and was personally united with it. So here, *The Word was made flesh*; that is, *The Word was made one with the Flesh*, by assuming the *Humane Nature* into a personal Union with it self.

Having thus explain'd to you the Sense and Meaning of the Words, I shall now conclude this Argument with three or four short Inferences from the whole.

1. From

1. From hence we may infer the *Eternal Divinity* of our *Blessed Saviour*, even from this *great Name The Word*, that is here attributed to him. For since it is so apparent that this Phrase is a *Term of Art* derived from the *Schools* of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and since by it they did all so generally understand a *Divine Person* subsisting from all *Eternity*, it must necessarily follow that the *Holy Ghost*, deriving it from them, and applying it to our *Blessed Saviour*, must use it to the *same Sense*; for otherwise he were better never to have used it at all, because by discoursing in the *same Language* with them, he will give us *just* occasion to think that he means the *same thing*, namely, that *Christ*, whom he calls *The Word*, is a *Divine Person* subsisting from all *Eternity*; which if he doth not mean by using that *Term*, he will almost necessarily betray us into a *false Belief* concerning our *Saviour*. As, to instance briefly in a *Case* of another *Nature*; Our *Saviour* in his *Sermons* doth frequently press us to *Meekness* and *Patience*, *Humility* and *Charity*; all which are *Terms* frequently used long before in the *Moral Philosophy*, both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, by which they signify such and such *particular Virtues*. Since therefore our *Saviour* doth use the *same Terms* with them, we have *just Reason* to conclude that he means the *same Virtues* by them; and should he mean any thing else, his very using of these *Terms* would necessarily impose upon us a *false Sense* of his meaning; For how should we understand his Meaning, but by his Words? And how should we understand his Words, but by the *common Import* and *Signification* of them? And can we imagine that the *Spirit of Truth* would have ever described our *Saviour* by a *Term* that was so generally used to signify a *Divine Person* subsisting from all *Eternity*, and used it *too*, as he doth, without any *Restraint* or *Limitation*, nay, and so seemingly at least to the *same Purpose*, as he doth in the *three first Verses* of this Chapter, where he describes the *Divine Nature* and *Operations* of *Christ The Word*, in the *same Terms* in which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* were wont to describe the *Divinity* of their *ΛΟΓΟΣ*; can we imagine, I say, that the *Holy Spirit* would have done thus, had he known *Christ* to be nothing but a *meer Man* that never was before he was born of his Mother? Far be it from us to charge that *Blessed Spirit* with imposing such a *Delusion* upon Mankind.

2. Hence I infer the *astounding Love* of our *Blessed Saviour* in condescending so low as to be made *Flesh* for us, and assume our *Nature*. For what he was before he took our *Nature*, you have heard already: He was no *less* than the *Eternal Word of the Father*; in whose Bosom he enjoyed the *supremest Degree* of *Bliss* and *Happiness*, being crowned with *Glory*, and incircled about with the *Essential Rays* of the *Divinity*. And yet such was his *Love* to *poor Mortals*, so *infinite* was his *Zeal* and *Concern* for our *Happiness*, that, seeing the *Misery* we were plunged into, he could not rest, no not in the *blessed Arms* of his Father, but strip himself of all his *Majesty* and *Bliss*, and comes down among us, and assumes our *Nature* to save and rescue us, and invite and lead us to those *Heavenly Mansions* from whence he descended to us. Lord, what a *Prodigy* of *Love* was here, as doth not only puzzle my *Conceit*, but out-reach my *Wonder* and *Admiration*! For when I seriously consider it, though it be a *Blessing* beyond all my *Hopes*, and such as I could never have had the *Impudence* to desire; yet it fills my *Mind* with an *awful Horror*, to think that there was a *Time* when the *great God* was here upon the *Earth* in my *Form* and *Nature*, and conversed familiarly with such *mortal Wights* as my self, and for my sake, and such *poor Worms* as I, patiently under-went the *common Infirmities* of *Men*, and willingly exposed himself to the *Contempt* and *Scorn* of a *malevolent World*, and the *Malice* and *Cruelty* of those *barbarous Men* to whom he gave *Being*, and could with the *Breath* of his *Nostrils* have scattered into *Atoms*, and all this in *meer Compassion* to a *Company* of *apostatized Natures*, who had so highly deserved to be thrown from his *Care* and *Mercy* for ever. O my Soul, how am I astonished at this *Miracle* of *Love*! Methinks when I consider it I am looking down from a *stupendous Precipice*, whose *Height* fills me with a *trembling Horror*, and even over-setting *Reason*.

3. From hence I infer what *mighty* Obligations we have *for ever* to love and serve our *Blessed Redeemer*. If our Hearts are capable of being warmed into *any* degree of Affection, sure 'tis impossible but we must be affected at such an *unheard* of Instance of Love. For the *Son of God* to leave his Father's Bosom, where he was infinitely more *happy* than we can express and think of, and disguise himself in *mortal* Flesh, and become a *Man of Sorrows*, that he might make me a *Man of endless* Joys: Can my Heart hold when I think of this? Is it possible I should reflect upon such a *prodigious* Instance of Affection, without being wrapt into an *Extasy* of Love? *Blessed Jesus*, what *barbarous* Hearts do we carry about with us, that will not melt before the Flames of thy Love! Flames that are sufficient to kindle *Seraphims*, and to fill all *reasonable* Breasts with *burning* Affections towards thee! For how is it possible that any *Man*, I had almost said that any *Devil*, should be so *dissingenuous* and *ill-natured* as not to be affected with such *stupendous* Kindness? When we see a Child slight his *careful* and *indulgent* Parents, we are ready to account him an *unnatural* Monster; when we see a Man neglect his Friend, or disregard his Benefactor, we presently call him *base* and *ungrateful*; nay, when we see one abuse a *poor brute* Creature that fawns upon him, and expresses its Kindness to him, we look upon it as an *undoubted* Sign of a very *hard* Heart, and an *ill* Nature: What Term then can we find in all the *World of Words* that is *odious* enough to express our Disaffection to our *Blessed Redeemer*, to whom we are so infinitely obliged? *Base*, *Dissingenuous*, *Ill-natured*, and *Ungrateful*, are all too soft; 'tis something beyond *Barbarous* and *Devilish*. For one would think that neither the most *inhumane* *Canibal* on *Earth*, nor the *blackest* *Devil* in *Hell*, could ever be guilty of so *foul* a Crime, which hath something in it *too monstrous* for any Words to express. Well therefore may the *Heavens* be astonished, and the *Earth* tremble, and all the Creation of *God* stand amazed at us, to see how *insensible* we are of this most *ravishing* and *endearing* Love. Well may we be amazed at our selves, and wonder at our own Stupidity, to think that the *Son of God* should be so *kind* as to come down from *Heaven* to visit us, to leave the Habitation of his Glory, and shroud his *Divinity* in *mortal* Flesh, and make himself a *miserable* Wight, merely that he might make us *happy*, and advance us to that Glory and Bliss which for our sakes he willingly abandoned; and yet that we are no more touched and affected with it, than with the most *indifferent* Thing in the *World*. *Blessed God*, what are we made of? What kind of Souls do we carry about with us, that no Kindness will oblige us, no not the most *endearing* that ever was known or heard of? Doubtless should any *Man* have shewn us but half this Kindness, should a *Friend* but offer to die for us, or a *Prince* to descend from his Throne, and put himself into the State of a *Beggar*, to enrich and advance us in the *World*, we should have thought our selves bound to him as long as we lived; and should we have thought any Services too much, any Requisites too *dear* for him, we should have been look'd upon as *Monsters* of Ingratitude, as the Reproaches and Scandals of *humane* Nature, and been hiss'd out of all Society for a Company of *infamous* Villains, *unworthy* of the least Respect or Favour from Mankind. But for a *Friend* to die, or a *Prince* to become a *Beggar* for our sakes, alas what *poor inconsiderable* Things are they, compared with the Condescensions of the *Son of God*, who humbled himself much *lower* in becoming a *Man*, than the most *glorious* Angel in *Heaven* could have done in assuming the Nature of a Worm. And can we be so *inhumane* as not to be moved by such a Miracle of *condescending* Love? Is it the less, because it is the Love of *God*, or doth it less deserve our Requit? What Excuse then can we make for our *wretched* Insensibility? O *ungrateful* that we are! With what Confidence can we shew our Heads among *reasonable* Beings, after we have so barbarously slighted our *best* Friend, and behaved our selves so *dissingenuously* towards our *greatest* Benefactor? How can we pretend to any thing that is *modest* or *ingenuous*, *tender* or *apprehensive* in *humane* Nature, when nothing will oblige us, no not that *astonishing* Love that made the *Son of God* leave all his Glory, and become a *poor miserable* Mortal for our sakes? O *blessed Jesus*! what do thy *holy Angels* think of us! How do they *blessed Saints* relent

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our Unkindness towards thee! yea, how justly will the Devils themselves reproach and upbraid our Baseness, who, *bad* as they are, were never so much Devils yet as to spurn the Love of a Redeemer, coming down from *Heaven* to die and suffer for their sakes! Wherefore as we would not be hiss'd at by all the *reasonable* World, and become Spectacles of Horror to *God*, and *Angels*, and *Devils*, let us endeavour to affect our selves with the Love of our Redeemer, and to inflame *our own* Souls with the Sense of his Kindness, who hath done such *mighty* things to endear and oblige us.

4. From hence I infer what *monstrous* Disingenuity it would be in us to think much of *parting* with any thing, or *doing* any thing for the sake of *Christ*, who for our sakes parted with his Father's Bosom, and all those *infinite* Delights which he there enjoyed, and united himself to our *miserable* Nature that he might make us *good* and *happy* for ever. And now after all this, with what Conscience or Modesty can we grudge to do any thing which he shall require at our hands? Should he command me to descend into the *lowest* Form of Beings, and to become the most *wretched* and *contemptible* of all Animals, could I be such a *Caitif* as to deny him, who descended much *lower* for the sake of me? Should he remand me back into *Non-entity*, and bid me cease to be *for ever*? Alas! the Distance is nothing so *great* between me and *nothing*, as 'twas betwixt *him* and that *humane Nature* which he assumed for my sake. Should he require me to die for him under all those *lingering* and *exquisite* Tortures which the *blessed Martyrs* suffered for his Name, what Proportion were there between what he requires of me, and what he hath done for me? He only requires that I should pass through *Death* to *Heaven* for him, but he came from *Heaven* to pass through *Death* for me; so that for his sake I should only put off a *wretched* Garment of *Flesh*, that I may be inrobed with *Glory* and *Immortality*; but for my sake he put off his Robes of *Glory* and *Majesty*, that he might wear my *frail* and *mortal* *Flesh*, and therein reconcile me to *God*, and make me everlastingly *happy*: And when I may advance my self into an Equality with *Angels*; by suffering the Agonies of a *miserable* Death for him, shall I refuse, or think much of it; when he who was *equal with God* in *Glory* and *Happiness*, was so ready to be born a *wretched miserable* Man for me? Should he require me to give my Substance to the *Poor*, and leave my self *destitute* of all Supplies and Comforts; could I deny so *poor* a Request to *him* who forsook an *Heaven* of *infinite* Pleasures for my sake, and exposed himself *naked* to the Mercy of a *wretched, wicked, and ill-natured* World, from whom he could expect nothing but the most *barbarous* Contempt and Cruelty? Sure, one would think 'twere impossible for any *reasonable* Being to deny such *poor*, such *inconsiderable* Boons to such a *great* and *deserving* Benefactor; and yet these are much more than what he ordinarily requires at our hands. For that which he ordinarily requires of us is, that we would forsake those *Vices* which are as *injurious* to us as they are *hateful* to *him*, and which are therefore *hateful* to him, because they are our Enemies; and that we would practise those *Virtues* in which the Perfection and Happiness of our Nature is involved, and which we can no more be *happy* without, then we can be without Being. And Can I think much to part with those Lusts for his sake, which are my Shames and Infelicities, who never grudg'd to part with *Heaven* for mine? Can they be as *dear* to me as his Father's Bosom was to him? and yet he left *that* for Love of me; And shall not I leave *these* for Love of him? Methinks if we will not part with them for *our own* sakes, as being *destructive* to our Peace and Happiness; yet had we the *least* spark of Ingenuity in us, we should gladly part with them for the sake of our Saviour, who for *ours* was so ready to part with all that was *dear* to him. Can we be such Wretches as to refuse to serve him, when he requires nothing of us but what we are obliged to by *our own* Interest? Are we so *lost* to all that is *ingenuous* and *modest*, that we will not obey *him* when he only requires us to be kind to *our selves*? O *wretched* Mortals! Doth his Coming down from *Heaven* to save you, deserve this *barbarous* Treatment at your hands, that to spite *him* you should injure *your selves*, and wound his Authority thro' *your own* Sides? Had he been wholly *indifferent* to you, it had been
very

very unreasonable to reject his Service when it altogether consists in serving your selves ; but to disobey so dear a Friend, to whom we are obliged by such stupendous Favours, when he enjoins us nothing but the means of our own Happiness, is such a Piece of monstrous and unnatural Baseness, as the Devil himself can hardly parallel. O unkind that we are ! that we will not be good to our selves for our Saviour's sake, and that when he conjures us to it, as he doth, even by all the Love that we owe him ! For so John 14. 15. *If ye love me, saith he, keep my Commandments ; Consider what mighty things I have done for you ; how I left my Throne in Heaven for your sakes, and became a miserable mortal Man : And now that I am going from you, and am offering up my Life to Redeem you, if ever I have merited any Love at your hands, express it in keeping my Commandments. 'Tis no great matter that I require of you, 'tis only that you would be kind to your selves, that you would let Misery alone, and endeavour to be as happy as Heaven can make you. This is all the Requital that I expect at your hands, that you would be as good and happy as I would have you ; and this, which is the Sum of my Commands, I conjure you strictly to observe, even by all the Love that you owe me. O blessed Jesus ! one would have thought thou hadst been requiring some mighty Trial of our Love to thee, that we should do some great Thing for thee to which nothing could prompt us but only our Gratitude and Kindness : But when thou only requirest us to express our Love to thee in doing that which is the highest Expression of our Love to our selves, can we be so dissingenuous as not to do that for thy sake to whom we are so infinitely obliged, which we are bound to do for our own sakes as well as thine ?*

5. And lastly, Hence I infer what a glorious Thing it is to do Good, since the Son of God, having so great an Opportunity of doing Good to the World, thought it worth his While to come down from Heaven, and assume our Natures, and undergo our Miseries, as if he esteemed it more glorious and becoming the Majesty and Divinity of his Person, to dwell upon Earth with poor miserable Mortals, among whom he might do the greatest Good, than to sit above upon the Throne of Heaven, and receive the most humble Adorations of Angels ; for 'twas only for an Opportunity of doing the greatest Good that he exchanged the Glory and Happiness of Heaven, chusing rather to become a miserable Man to make others good and happy, than to continue among those infinite Delights with which the Heavenly State abounds. What a most glorious Thing then is it to do Good, when our most wise Redeemer chose it before Heaven it self, when he thought it more eligible to come down upon Earth and make us happy, than to dwell in the Bosom of his Father, and shine in Heaven with the Brightness and Glory of his Divinity. And if there be nothing in Heaven so glorious as doing Good, what is there upon Earth that may be compared unto it ? What dim, what sullied Things are all the Poms and Splendors of this World, compared with the Glory of doing Good to others, when God preferred it before Heaven it self ? To conquer Kingdoms, to lead the World in Triumph after us, how mean and inconsiderable are they compared with that Glory which the Son of God forsook meerly to do Good to the World ? A thing which he esteemed so great and illustrious, that he did not only leave Heaven for it, but scorned and despised the Kingdoms of the Earth, finding nothing below that was worthy of him, but only to go about doing Good ! For this was his constant Employment, as you may see, Acts 10. 21. And now is it possible that after this great Example, we should think Beneficence a cheap or vulgar Thing ? Can we think it a Dishonour to stoop to the meanest Offices, whereby we may serve the Souls or Bodies of our Brethren, when the Son of God came down from Heaven, and veiled his Glory in mortal Flesh, for no other End but to do Good ? O foolish Creatures that we are ! did we but understand and consider what a magnificent Thing it is to supply the Necessities of Men, and contribute to their Happiness, we should doubtless embrace it as our greatest Preferment, and think ourselves bound to bless God for ever for furnishing us with Occasions of doing Good, that he doth deem us worthy of such an illustrious Employment, to have some share with himself in the Glory of it, that he will vouchsafe to us an Opportunity

Opportunity to *honour* and *magnify* our selves by acting this *Divine*, this *Godlike* Part in the World. Never then let us think that we dishonour our selves, tho' we stoop *never* so low, when it is to do *Good*; no, though it be to *visit* a Beggar, to *dress* the Sores of a *poor Lazar*, to *instruct* or *comfort* the *meanest* Wretch in all thy Neighbourhood. For now thou actest the Part of *God* in doing the most *glorious* Thing in all the World; a Thing for which the *greatest* Princes may envy thee, and the *blessed God* for ever applaud thee! Now thou art doing that which the *Son of God* came down from *Heaven* to do, and which he thought more worthy of his Choice than to Reign over *Angels* in *Heaven*: So that either we must say, that he was *unwise* for preferring it before *Heaven*, or else we must acknowledge that we are infinitely *foolish* in preferring any Thing in the World before it.

II. I now proceed to the *Second Proposition*, *And dwelt among us full of Grace and Truth*. For that these *later Words* [*full of Grace and Truth*] belong to the *former*, [*And dwelt among us*] you may plainly see by the *Parentthesis* in your Bible, by which they are interrupted and broken off from one another. In the Explication of these Words, I shall do these *Two Things*:

1. Enquire what is here meant by the *Word's dwelling among us*.
2. What we are to understand by his being *full of Grace and Truth*.

1. What is here meant by the *Word's dwelling among us*? In the *Greek* it is ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν; that is, he pitched his Tabernacle among us; which seems plainly to refer to God's dwelling in the Tabernacle under the *Mosaic Law*. For the *Greek Word* ἐσκήνωσεν comes immediately from the *Hebrew Shacan*, and differs from it only by the *Greek Termination*; and from *Shacan* comes the word *Shechinah*, by which the *Hebrews* were wont to express God's *glorious Presence* upon Earth, and especially his Habitation in the *holy Tabernacle* between the *two Cherubims*, where he is said to dwell, 1 Sam. 4. 4. and 2 Sam. 6. 2. because from thence God was wont to speak, and discover himself by a *visible Brightness* and *Glory*: And accordingly this Presence, or Habitation of God, is called in the *Greek* δόξα and ἐμφάνεια, *Glory* and *Appearing*. Thus Numb. 16. 19. it is said, that when the *Congregation* drew near to the Tabernacle, the *Glory of the Lord* appeared unto them; and v. 42. it is said, that a *Cloud* covered the Tabernacle, and the *Glory of the Lord* appeared. So when the *Glory* is said to be departed from *Israel*, 1 Sam. 4. 21. it's plain that by that *Glory* is meant this *visible Appearance* of God in a *glorious Brightness* from between the *Cherubims*. So Rev. 21. when it had been said of the *New Jerusalem*, that it was ἐσκήνωσεν, the *Tabernacle of God with us*, ver. 3. that being repeated again, v. 11. is said to have the *Glory of God* in it, and the *Glory of God* to enlighten it, v. 23. Now it seems most probable that this *glorious Shechinah*, Presence, or Habitation of God, consisted in the Presence of *Angels*; who being the *Courtiers* of *Heaven*, where they appear there God is said to be peculiarly present. And hence it is that the Well *Labi-roi*, where the *Angel* appeared to *Hagar*, Gen. 16. 7, 14. is by the *Jerusalem Targum*, stiled the Well ubi manifestata illi fuit Præsentia Domini Majestatica, where the Presence of God in Majesty was manifested to her: And that *visible Glory* which appeared from between the *Cherubims*, is called by the same name, viz. the Gloria Majestaticæ præsentia Domini, the *Glory of the Majestick Presence* of God; which is a plain Evidence that the *Jews* believed the *Majestick Presence* of God to be nothing else but the Appearance of *Angels*. And of the same Mind was the *Author to the Hebrews*, Heb. 2. 2. For the *Law*, saith he, was spoken by *Angels*; and so *St. Stephen*, Acts 7. 53. The *Law* was received by the *Disposition* of *Angels*; and *St. Paul*, that the *Law* was ordained by *Angels* in the hand of a *Mediator*, Galat. 3. 19. Whereas *Exod. 19. 11.* compared with 20. v. 21. it is said, that the *Lord* came down in the sight of all the *People*, and talked with them; that is, as you will there find, he spoke the *Law* to them. Which is a plain Evidence that that *glorious Desc.* of

of God's Presence upon *Mount Sinai*, where the Law was spoken, was in the Opinion of the *Author to the Hebrews*, nothing but the Presence of Angels; who when they were to represent the *Divine Presence*, were wont to appear in *bright and radiant Bodies*; and therefore where it is said in *Isaiah's Vision*, *Isa. 6. 1.* that *he saw the Lord sitting upon a Throne*, and that *his Train filled the Temple*; that is, his Train of Angels; and this Train of Angels our Saviour calls the *Glo-ry of the Lord*, *John 12. 41.* which is the same with the *Shechinah*, or *Majestick Presence*: And therefore perhaps they are called *Angels of Light*, in reference to that *lucid, shining, flaming Appearance* which they were wont to make: And in *Psalms 104. 4.* God is said to make his Ministers a flaming fire; that is, when they are to make a visible Representation of his *Majestick Presence* to Mankind. But besides this, *Isa. 63. 9.* you have mention made of the *Angel of God's Presence which saved Israel*; which seems to denote the *Head and Chief* of those Angels, which by their glorious Appearances did represent God to Mankind. By which

* De Agricul. p.
152.

Angel the Jews did generally understand the *Messias*, or *Eternal Word*: For so *Philo**, speaking of God's committing the Care of his Flock to his *first-born Son*, *The Word*, tells us, *That this is that Angel whom God promised to send before the Camp of Israel, even the Angel of his Presence.* And so also *Rab. Menahem*, upon the 14th of *Exod. 19.* tells us, that the Angel which went before the Camp of Israel was *Shechinah*, the Presence, or Majesty of God, and that he is called the Angel or Prince of the World, because the Government of the World is in his hands. And to the same Purpose *Moses the Son of Neheman*, *Præterea Scriptum est*, saith he, *Et Angelus faciei ejus salvos fecit ipsos*, &c. that is, *It is written, the Angel of his Presence shall save them, viz. that Angel which is the Presence of God, of whom it is said, My Presence shall go before thee, and I will cause thee to rest.* Moreover, saith he, *this is that Angel of whom the Prophets foretold, The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his Temple, the Angel of the Covenant whom ye desire*; which both the Ancient Jews and Christians interpret to be the *Messias*; and this, saith he, *is he who governs the World, that brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt, and to whom the most High God communicates his own Name.* And this without doubt was he whom God calls his Presence, when he promised *Moses*, that his Presence should go along with him, *Exod. 33. 14.* for this Presence is there said to be the Angel of God; both which puttogether make him to be the Angel of God's Presence, *Exod. 23. 20.* And accordingly instead of, *Say not before the Angel of the Lord*, *Eccles. 5. 6.* the *Septuagint* render it, *Say not before the Presence of God*; that is, before the Angel of his Presence. And since to this Angel of his Presence, God doth attribute not only his Prerogative of Forgiving Sins, but also his own Name, as you may see he doth, *Exod. 23. 21.* it seems very probable, what not only the Jews, but many very Learned Christians do assert, that it was no created Angel, but the *Eternal Word* or *Messias*: For saith God to *Moses*, *Behold I send an Angel before thee*, &c. *beware of him, and obey his Voice; provoke him not, for he will not Pardon your Transgressions, for my Name is in him*; that is, my Name *Jehovah*, which is the proper and incommunicable Name of God. And accordingly you frequently read of an Angel that is called by the Name *Jehovah*, which I doubt not was the same with this Angel of God's Presence. Thus that Angel of the Lord which appeared to *Moses* in the *burning Bush*, is called by the Name *Jehovah*, and stiled the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, *Exod. 3. 2.* comp. *4. 5.* And one of those Angels that appeared to *Abraham* in the *Plains of Mamre*, is called the Lord, and the Judge of all the Earth, *Gen. 18. 1, 25.* So also he that stood on the top of the Ladder in *Jacob's Vision*, is in *Gen. 28. 13.* called the Lord God of *Abraham*, and the God of *Isaac*; whereas in *Gen. 31. 11.* he is called the Angel of the Lord; and afterwards, *v. 13.* the God of *Bethel*. Which seems to me a plain Evidence, that that Angel of God was God, since both those Titles were attributed to the same Person; and that he was also that very Angel of his Presence whom God promised to send before the Camp of Israel, since in him it is apparent the Name of God was, i. e. the Name *Jehovah*. And it's very observable, that this

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very Angel both *Philo* and the *Chaldee Paraphrase* stiles the *Word of God*; and therefore those Words of God to *Joshua*, *Jos. 1. 5.* *As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee*, the *Paraphrase* renders thus, *As my Word was assisting to Moses so it shall be assisting to thee*: And 'tis the Observation of the *Learned Masius*, that generally where the *Hebrew Text* speaks of God, either conversing with Men, or managing their Affairs, that *Paraphrase*, instead of God, uses this Phrase *the Word of God*. From whence it is evident, that it was the *received Doctrine* of the *Jews*, that God was always present with Mankind by his *Eternal Word*; which is therefore the more considerable, because it so exactly agrees with the *Doctrine* of the *Primitive Fathers*. For so *Tertullian*, *Christus semper egit in Dei Patris nomine*; *ipse ad initio conversatus est cum Patriarchis & Prophetis*. And in his Book against *Praxian* he tells us, *That from Adam to the Patriarchs and Prophets, Christ always descended to discourse with Men*; and that that God who conversed upon Earth with Men, was no other than that *Eternal Word* that was to be made *Flesh*. And the same Thing is strenuously asserted also by *Justin Martyr* in his Discourses with *Trypho the Jew*. Nor can I see any Reason why he should not be the *Angel of God's Presence*, since elsewhere he is expressly called the *Angel* of that Covenant by which God hath oblig'd himself to be present with his Church for ever, *Mal. 3. 1.* And the *New Testament* so often declares him to be the *Image*, and *Character*, and *Representative* of God; and himself tells *Philip*, that he did so perfectly represent the Father, that *whosoever had seen him had seen the Father*, *John 14. 9.* And if this be so, as it seems highly probable, that *The Word* was the *Angel of God's Presence*; that is, the *Chief* or *Prince* of those Angels that represented God in the World, then it will follow that the *Shechinah*, or *Majestick Presence* of God, consisted in a *glorious* and *visible* Appearance of the *Word* with a Troop of *blessed* Angels attending him in *bright* and *luminous* Forms. And this I conceive was the *glorious Presence* of God which came down first upon *Mount Sinai*, and afterwards removed into the *Tabernacle*, and abode between the two *Cherubims*. And this I am rather induced to believe, because I find the *Descent* of God's Presence upon *Mount Sinai*, is described in the same manner as *Christ's* coming to Judgment; for so, *Matth. 16. 27.* it is said, that *he shall come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels*; and *St. Jude* tells us, that *he shall come with his holy Myriads, or Ten Thousands*, *v. 14.* for so it ought to be render'd: And the Lord in the same manner is said to come from *Sinai* with his *holy Ten Thousands, or Myriads*; for so it is in the *Hebrew*, *Deut. 33. 2.* And since they are both described in the same manner, it seems to follow, that they were both the same *Majestick Presence* of God, even the *Eternal Word* assuming a *glorious* Form, and attended with *Myriads* of *bright* and *shining* Angels. And this same Presence it was that was afterwards displayed in the *Tabernacle*, which was said to be filled with the *Glory of the Lord*, which shone from between the *Cherubims* with a *bright* and *visible* Splendor, that is, with the *illustrious* Appearances of the *Eternal Word*, and those *glorious* Angels that attended him. And upon that Mount, and in that *Tabernacle*, did this *blessed Word* represent his Father, even as the *Vice-Roy* doth the *Sovereign Prince*; for there in his Father's Person, and by his Authority, he gave forth his Laws and Oracles to the Seed of *Abraham*, and as the *Vice-gerent* of the most *High God* governed the House of *Israel*, and distributed to them *Rewards* and *Punishments*, according as they behaved themselves towards him: For upon all the fore named Reasons it seems highly probable, that he was the Lord who spoke to *Moses*, and from between the *Cherubims*, and that thence delivered the Law to him. So that as he was the *Shechinah*, or *glorious Presence* of the most *High God* in the *Tabernacle*, he did there represent his Person by bearing his Authority, and ruling the House of *Israel* as his *Substitute* and *Vice-Roy*.

And that the Words of my Text do refer to this *glorious* Appearance of the *Word* in the *Tabernacle*, and to his representing of the most *High God* there, is very evident, in that it is not only said that he tabernacled among them, which evidently alludes to his dwelling in the *old* *Tabernacle*, but that they saw his *Glory*

too, which is a *plain* Allusion to that Glory of his which filled the Tabernacle. So that the Meaning of these Words, *He dwelt among us*, seems to be this, that as *Christ*, who is the *Eternal Word*, was the *Shechinah*, the *Divine Presence*, or *Angel of God's Presence*, which in the Tabernacle of *old* represented the most *High* to the *Jews*; so he also abode or tabernacled in our *Flesh* as the *Representative* of his Father to *Man-kind*. In the Tabernacle of our *Flesh* he displayed the Glory of his Father to us; he openly manifested and represented him to the *World*, even as of *old* he was wont to do in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. For, *The Word* to Tabernacle among us must necessarily signify more than barely to dwell or live among us; for it must signify to dwell as the *Shechinah* in the Tabernacle, that is, as the most *glorious Presence* or *Representative* of the most *High God*, as one that was vested with the *Divine Authority*, and that was the *Vicegerent* of the Father of all things. So that, *He dwelt among us*, seems to signify the same with *He reigned among us* in his Father's stead, as one who bore his Authority, and represented his Person, and to whom for the future we were to pay the *same* Homage and Reverence that we were bound to render to the most *High* himself, who under *himself* hath authorized him to be our Prince and Governour to declare his *Divine Will* to us, and exact our Obedience thereunto by *rewarding* and *punishing* us according to the Tenour of those Laws which he hath established in his *bles-sed Gospel*; for this is plainly implied in his *Shechanizing* or *Tabernacling*, viz. his being the *glorious Representative* of *God* in the *World*. He tabernacled among us, that is, he acted in *God's* stead, as one that represented his Father; and this he did in our *Flesh* in a far more *glorious* manner than ever he did in the *Mosaick Tabernacle*: For in our *Flesh* and *Nature* he tabernacled *full of Grace and Truth*; which brings me to the next Enquiry, viz.

2. What is here meant by his *dwelling among us full of Grace and Truth*? By these *two* Phrases the Design of the *Holy Penman* is doubtless to distinguish the manner of his dwelling among us from that of his dwelling among the *Jews* in the Tabernacle: For a little after he uses the *same* Phrases in Contradistinction to the Law of *Moses*: *The Law*, saith he, *was given by Moses*, but *Grace and Truth by Jesus Christ*, v. 17. *God the Eternal Word* gave the Law to *Moses*, and *Moses* gave it to the People of *Israel*; but *Jesus Christ*, that is, the *Eternal Word incarnate*, gave not the Law, but *Grace and Truth*. So in the Text, *The Word incarnate*, or tabernacled in our *Flesh*, did *Shechanize*, or perform the Part of his *Father's* *supreme Representative* among us *full of Grace and Truth*; which implies something beyond what he did when he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moses*, and there as the *Vice Roy* of *God* reigned over the *House* of *Jacob*. That I may therefore more fully explain this Matter to you, I will briefly consider these *two* Phrases *apart*, and shew you in what Particulars they each of them distinguish his dwelling among us from his dwelling in the *Mosaick Tabernacle*.

1. He dwelt among us *full of Grace*, which distinguishes his dwelling among us from that more *severe* and *rigorous* Manner in the former Tabernacle; and that in these following Particulars:

1st, He dwelt among us *full of Grace* in respect of the *Sweetness* and *Obligingness* of his Behaviour, in Contradistinction to that more dreadful and terrible manner of his conversing with the *Jews*, when he tabernacled among them. The *Jews* being a most *stubborn* and *stiff-necked* Generation, (as they are often called in the *Old Testament*) the *Eternal Word* thought fit to converse among them in such a way as was most *suitable* to their *Genius* and Temper, to break their *Stubbornness* with the Dread of his Power, and awe them with the Terror of his Majesty. And accordingly you find that when he came down first upon *Mount Sinai*, he was attended with a *loud sounding Trumpet*, with *Thunders* and *Lightnings*, with *Fire* and *Smoke*, and all the Equipage of a most *dreadful* Majesty, such as caused the Mountain and the People to tremble, *Exod. 19. 16, 20*. And afterwards it is said, that the Glory in which he appeared, when the People saw him upon the Mount, was like a *devouring Fire*, in which *glorious* Appearance he afterwards removed into the *Tabernacle*, and there abode between the *Cheru-*
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bims, Exod. 40. 34, 35. And when in all this *dreadful* Majesty he appeared unto them, they are kept at a *great* Distance from him, and were severely forbid to approach him, lest he should *break forth upon them, and destroy them*, Exod. 19. 24. And whenever they provoked him by their Murmurings and Rebellions, his Wrath broke forth like Lightning upon them, and consumed the *ring-leading* Rebels, that by their Example the rest might be warned to do no more wickedly. Thus in all his Converses with them he clothed himself in a *formidable* Majesty to break, and awe their *sturdy* Spirits, and force their *stiff* Necks to yield to the Yoke of his *Sovereign* Authority. But when he assumed our Nature, and tabernacled among us in our Flesh, he laid by that *astounding* Majesty that was wont to render him so dreadful to the *Israelites*, and put on all the Condescensions and Sweetnesses of a most familiar and endearing Conversation, and conversed amongst Men in such a *generous, friendly, and courteous* Manner as was most apt to charm and inamour the World. He was free without being *vain* or *trifling*, serious without being *sour* and *morose*; his Humour always *cheerful* and *uniform*, and his Gravity was equally distant from *Moroseness* and *Vanity*; and in a Word, his Deportment was made up of all the Accomplishments that can command either Love or Honour. And though now and then he falls into high Expressions of Indignation, yet 'twas only against those base Fellows the *Pharisees*, who under a Pretence of being *Saints*, and the *Godly* Party, were *blotted* up with Pride and Arrogance, and *canker'd* with Malice and *ill* Nature; for which they were so abominable in his Eyes, whose Temper was altogether so *loving* and *divine* that he could not mention them without calling them *Hypocrites, and the Children of the Devil*. And if to all this you add his *profound* Humility and Condescension, his *Meekness* under Reproaches, and his *Constancy* and *Patience* under the *greatest* Sufferings, how much more *sweet, grateful, and charming* was this than when he appear'd in such a *dreadful* and *astounding* Majesty upon *Mount Sinai*, and in the Tabernacle of *Moses*? 'Tis true, the *Innocency* and *Purity* of his Life, the *Divinity* of his Doctrine, and the many mighty Miracles that he wrought, could not but imprint an awful Majesty upon his Person; but yet 'twas a graceful Majesty, a Majesty full of Grace and Sweetness, and such as was much more apt to *endear* than to *affright* Men! For, as for the *Virtue* of his Life, and the *Divinity* of his Doctrine, it could not but attract all those who had any Love and Esteem for Virtue and Goodness. And as for his Miracles, they were vastly different from those which he wrought in the Wilderness, which had *little* else in them but Matter of Terror and Astonishment; but these were all such as did express his Kindness to the World, and so were much more apt to *oblige* than to *terrify* those that beheld them: *For he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppress'd with the Devil*, Acts 10. 28. and *healing all manner of Sicknes, and all manner of Diseases among the People*, Matth. 4. 23. So that in respect of the *Sweetness* and *Obligingness* of his Conversation, he tabernacled among us *full of Grace*, in Contradistinction to that *terrible* Majesty in which he tabernacled among the *Jews*.

2dly, He tabernacled among us *full of Grace* in regard of the *Sweetness* and *Gentleness* of his Laws, in Contradistinction to those many *burthensom* Precepts which he gave when he tabernacled among the *Jews*. It's apparent by the History of that People that they were obstinately addicted to the Customs of *Egypt*, from whence they were brought, and of the Neighbouring Nations round about them; and thence it was that notwithstanding those *manifest* Discoveries that God had made of himself to them, and of his being the only *true* God, such as one would have thought had been *sufficient* to have convinced the most obstinate Gainfayers; yet *ever* and *anon* we find them starting aside to the *Idolatrous* Customs of the *Gentiles*, and revolting from that God who had so gloriously manifested himself among them. The *Eternal Word* therefore, when he came to tabernacle among them, he gave them abundance of Laws, the Matter of which was in its *own* Nature perfectly indifferent, that by those, as by so many Bounds and Fences, he might keep them from breaking out of God's Inclosure into the *wild*

Common of Gentilism; and such were the greatest Part of their *Ceremonial Laws*, some of which were instituted in Compliance with the more innocent Rites of the *Heathens*, and others in opposition to those which were purely *magical* and *idolatrous*. And hence it is that in the Law of their Ceremonies there are so many things enjoined them of which we can give no *tolerable Account*, they being either innocent Customs derived from the *Heathens* in Compliance with the *Jews*, or Prohibitions of those *magical* and *idolatrous* Customs in which the *Jews* had been educated in *Egypt*, and to which they were always very prone and inclinable. So that meerly to comply with the *Jews* in what was innocent, and restrain them in what was *hurtful* and *idolatrous*, the *Eternal Word* was fain to impose a *vast* number of *Positive Laws* upon them, which contained nothing but what was purely indifferent, and might have been done or undone without any Prejudice to the *Eternal Rules* of Goodness. And accordingly, *Ezek. 20. 24, 25.* it is said, that *because their Eyes were after their Fathers Idols, therefore God gave them Statutes that were not good, that is, had no intrinsic Goodness in them; and Judgments whereby they should not live.* And that God imposed these Things, not as good in themselves, but as accommodated to the present State and Temper of the *Israelites*, is evident from what the *Psalmist* says, *Psal. 51. 16. Thou desirest not Sacrifice; thou delightest not in Burnt-offerings;* though it is evident he had a farther End in imposing very many of these *sacred Rites*, namely to shadow out by them the *Mysteries of the Gospel*, and give them some *preludious Hints* of that *glorious Kingdom of Christ* that was afterwards to be established in the World: But by this means the *Jewish Law* was multiplied into so many Precepts, and those many of them so *expensive* and *burthensom*, that the *Apostle* calls it a *Yoke which neither they, nor their Fathers were able to bear, Acts 15. 10.* and elsewhere a *Yoke of Bondage, Gal. 5. 1.* Thus while the *Eternal Word* tabernacled among the *Jews*, his Laws were very *rigid* and *cumberfom*, being clogg'd with so *vast* a number of *positive Rites* and *Observances*: But when he came to tabernacle in our *Flesh*, he abolished all these *numerous Ceremonies*, and imposed nothing upon the World but what is *sweet*, and *easy*, and *full of Grace*. And hence himself tells us, *Matth. 11. 30. ἡ ζυγὴ μου χαρὴν καὶ ὀνέος ἐστίν, My Yoke is gracious, (for so it is in the Greek) and my Burthen is light;* for it imposes nothing upon us but what is most agreeable to our *rational Natures*, nothing but what we our selves, if we were *wise* and *good*, should reckon our selves obliged to, though he had never enjoined it. For all the Duty he requires of us results immediately from the Frame of our *Natures*, and the *unalterable Relations* we stand in to *God* and the World. For the Sum of all *Christian Duty* is contained in those *three Generals*, *to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present World;* and these must necessarily oblige us so long as we carry *such Beings* about us, and continue in *such Relations*. Whilst *God* is our *God* and *Creator*, we cannot be disobliged from living *godly*, that is, from *honouring* and *loving* him, from *fearing* and *trusting* in him, from *serving* and *adoring* him; for unless we could destroy our Relation to him, and cease to be his *Creatures*, the *Dueness* of these *Acts of Homage* and *Worship* from us to him, must necessarily abide for ever: Whilst we continue to be *reasonable Animals* we cannot be freed from the Obligation of *Sobriety*, which consists in governing our *Passions* and *Appetites* by our *Reason*; for till we can lay by our *Reason*, which is the *superiour Principle* of our *Nature*, and step into another Form of *Beings*, it will be always fit that our *inferiour Powers* should be subject to its *Conduct* and *Government*. Whilst we continue in the *Society* of *Men*, and are *Members* of the *Body of Mankind*, we cannot be released from the *Tyes of Righteousness*, which contains in it *Charity* and all other *sociable Vertues*; and till we cease to be related to *Mankind*, it can never cease to be *reasonable* for us to do what becomes our Relation, that is, to be *just*, *benign*, and *charitable* to one another. So that all that the *Word incarnate* hath enjoined us, is to do what we our selves must needs acknowledge is most *just* and *reasonable*, and what we should choose to do before any thing in the World, were we not prejudiced against it by our own *base Lusts* and *unreasonable Passions*. So that in respect

pect of those *gracious* Laws he gave us whilst he dwelt among us, he may well be said to dwell among us *full of Grace*.

3^{dly}, He dwelt among us *full of Grace* in respect of that *full* Pardon and Remission which he hath granted to Sinners in his *Gospel*, in Contradistinction to that *partial* and *incomplete* Pardon which he gave when he tabernacled among the *Jews*. For whilst the *Eternal Word* as his Father's Representative reigned over the Nation of *Israel*, he gave no *other* Pardon but *temporal* by the Law of *Moses*, which was the Rule and Instrument of his Government. And I'm sure that from the 20th of *Exod.* to the 27th of *Deut.* in which compass that whole Law is comprized, there is not the *least* mention of any *other* Pardon or Forgiveness allowed to Offenders, but only what respects their *temporal* Punishment; nay in *some* Cases this was not allowed, as particularly in the Cases of *Blasphemy*, *Idolatry*, and *Murder*, no not though they heartily repented of it. For all that Pardon which the *Mosaic* Law allowed, was indulged to them upon their offering up *Propitiatory Sacrifices*, which in these *exempted* Cases were not allowed of, but yet the *Apostle* tells us of all these Sacrifices in general, that *the Blood of Bulls and of Goats could not take away Sin*, Heb. 10. 4. that *they did sanctify only to the purifying of the Flesh*, Heb. 7. 13. that *they could not make him that did the Service perfect as pertaining to the Conscience*, Heb. 9. 9. that is, that they only released Offenders from the Obligation to *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical* Punishments, but could by no means free them from the *eternal* Punishments of the *other* Life. Not that I make the *least* Doubt but that truly *penitent* Offenders were forgiven the *eternal* Punishment *then* as well as *now*, and forgiven *too* for the Sake of *Jesus Christ*, the Lamb that was intentionally slain from the Beginning of the World; but by what hath been said it's plain they were not forgiven by Virtue of that Law whereby the *Eternal Word* reigned over the House of *Israel*, but rather by Virtue of that *Gospel* which was first preached to *Adam*, and afterwards to the *Patriarchs*; wherein *Christ* the *Seed of the Woman*, and the *Seed of Abraham*, is promised, in whom all Nations of the Earth should be blessed. 'Tis true, the Sacrifices of the *Law* were *typical* of the Sacrifice of *Christ*, and so consequently was that *temporal* Pardon obtained by them *typical* of that *eternal* Pardon which we do obtain by the *great* Propitiation of our *Saviour*; for so the *Apostle* tells us, that *the Law had in it a shadow of good things to come*, Heb. 10. 1. But we must not imagine that *eternal* Remission, which is the Effect of *Christ's* *real* Sacrifice, could ever be obtained by those Sacrifices which were only the Shadows and Resemblances of it. So that *that* Remission of Sins which the *Eternal Word* gave whilst he tabernacled among the *Jews*, was nothing near so *perfect* and *complete* as that which he afterwards proclaimed in the Tabernacle of our *Flesh*, because it neither extended to all kinds of Sins, nor yet to all kinds of Punishment; it left some unforgiven as to the Punishments of this Life, and it left all unforgiven as to the Punishments of the Life to come. But having pitched his Tabernacle in our *Flesh*, he did by the *meritorious* Sacrifice of himself obtain of his Father this *publick* Act of Grace, this *free* Charter of Mercy for all Mankind, That whosoever would repent and amend, whatsoever Sins he is guilty of, whatsoever Punishments he is obliged to, he shall certainly be forgiven them all, and be as freely received into God's Grace and Favour, as if he never had offended him; for he is the Propitiation for the Sins of the World; *And by him*, saith the *Apostle*, *all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses*, Acts 13. 39. In this respect therefore the *Eternal Word* dwelt among us *full of Grace*, in that he proclaimed such a full and perfect Pardon of all Sins, and of all Punishments to all that with a true Faith and hearty Repentance should turn unto him; and accordingly this Pardon is frequently called by the Name of *Grace*, or of the *Grace of God*, and of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, Acts 15. 11. Heb. 12. 15. and Rom. 3. 24.

4^{thly}, He dwelt among us *full of Grace* in respect of the *internal* Grace and Assistance, which he so abundantly afforded us above what he did to the *Jews* under the Law of *Moses* when he tabernacled among them. I make no doubt but
God

God in all Ages hath been always ready to assist good Men in their Duty. This the very *Heathens* themselves believed, that *ἡμεῖς διὰ τὸν θεὸν οὐδὲν ἀγαθόν*, that God did concur with all good Men, and that no Man did ever arrive to any eminent Degree of Virtue, without a *Divine Afflatus*, or Assistance. And had the good Men among the *Jews* been ignorant of this, what should move them to pray, as we find they often do, that God would wash and cleanse, and quicken and strengthen, and inviven them? For so, in the *Book of the Psalms*, you find good *David* very often praying that God would teach him his Commandments, and incline his Heart to keep them, and keep him back from presumptuous Sin. By which Prayers it's evident they had good Encouragement to hope that God would be ready to concur with them, and to bless their pious Endeavours with the internal Assistance of his Grace and Spirit. And this Encouragement I suppose they might have partly from their natural Notions of God, which must needs suggest to them that He being infinitely good as he is, will never be wanting to his Creatures in any thing that is necessary to the obtaining those noble Ends for which he created them, and consequently that he will be assistant to them in their Duty, which is the way to that End, and not leave them to contend with Difficulties which are insuperable to their natural Power and Ability; and partly from those general Evangelical Promises which God made to them by the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*, from whence they might fairly infer that he who had promised to do so much for them, upon Condition they persisted in their Duty and Allegiance to him, would never be wanting on his Part to strengthen and enable them to it. But I can by no means allow that they were encouraged to hope for any such Assistance from any Promise of that Law which the *Eternal Word* gave them when he tabernacled among them, and by which in his Father's stead he ruled and governed them; and that both because there is no such Promise found in all that Law, and because the *Apostle* tells us, that the Law was weak through the flesh, *Rom. 8. 3.* and calls it the *Ministration of Death* written and engraven in stones, in opposition to the *Ministration of the Spirit* that is not written in Tables of stone, but in fleshy Tables of the heart, *2 Cor. 3. 7, 8.* comp. with *ver. 3.* And *Galat. 3. 13, 14.* you find the *Apostle* opposes to the Curse of the Law, the Blessing of Abraham, and the Blessing of Abraham he tells us is the Promise of the Spirit through Faith, that is, by the Gospel. And thus under the Law there was doubtless an internal Grace and Assistance vouchsafed to good Men, though not promised by it; yet after the *Eternal Word* forsook the Tabernacle of Moses, and came to tabernacle in our Flesh, it's evident that then he did more plentifully communicate this his Grace to the World than ever; for then the Spirit was said to be shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord; and in the 16th verse of this 1st of John, we are said of his fulness to receive *χάρις ἀντὶ χάριτος*, Grace upon Grace; that is, Grace heaped upon Grace, and a vast over-flowing Abundance; according to that of *Theognis*, *ἄντ' ἀντὶ ἀντὶ ἀντὶ*, that is, thou givest me Calamities upon Calamities. So that unless we will our selves it is now impossible we should fall short either of our Duty, or the blessed Reward of it, since our Saviour is become such an over-flowing Fountain of Grace to us, and hath promised to communicate it to us in such plentiful Effusions if we will sincerely ask and honestly endeavour after it; and therefore in this respect also he may well be said to dwell among us full of Grace, in that while he dwelt among us he obtained for, and promised to us such an accumulated Plenty of inward Grace and Assistance to encourage and enable us to do his Commandments.

5thly, He dwelt among us full of Grace in respect of the Vastness of the Recompence which he promised to us, and which infinitely exceeds whatsoever he promised when he dwelt in the Tabernacle of Moses. For when the *Eternal Word* reigned over Israel as the Vice-Roy and Substitute of his Father, he only acted the Part of their Civil Sovereign or Governour; which Part he continued till they chose another King, and then he resigned his Title to the succeeding Heirs of David. And accordingly we find, that when the Israelites first desired a King of Samuel, God bids him hearken to their Cry; For, saith he, they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them, *1 Sam. 8. 7.*

Which

Which is a *plain* Argument that before he only acted as their *Political* Prince in that he interprets their desiring *another* King, to be a rejecting of him from reigning over them. For had he been no otherwile King over *Israel*, then as he is over *other* Nations where the *true* Religion is owned and professed, his Dominion might have fairly consisted with that of *another* King or Sovereign; and it would have been no more a rejecting God's Rule for *Israel* to desire a King, than it is for *France*, or *Spain*, or *England*. For it's plain the *Israelites* did not reject God's *Divine* Dominion, which he claims over the World as the *Omnipotent* Creator of all things; for then their Desire of a King had been *Idolatry*, and the Kings whom they desired had been *Idols*, or *false Gods*. It is plain therefore that it was his *Political* Dominion only which they rejected by desiring *another* King to Reign in his stead, which he interprets as their Intention to rob and divest him of that *Civil* Authority which till then he had claimed and exercised among them. So that the *plain* Sense of their Desire was this, *God* shall no longer be our *Civil* Sovereign, but for the *future* we are resolved to have a King from among *our* selves, even as *other* Nations round about us, whom we will invest with the same *Civil* Authority which hitherto he hath challenged and exercised among us. *God* the *Eternal* Word therefore being their *Civil* Prince or Ruler, as such he gave them the *Mosaick* Law, which he only designed to be the Rule or Instrument of his *Civil* Government and Dominion; which is the Reason why in *that* Law he only promised *civil* or *temporal* Blessings because it was only a Law of *Civil* Government, and as such could design no further than the *civil* or *temporal* Happiness of those who were to be ruled and governed by it. And accordingly if you peruse the Promises of that Law, you will find that they all consist of *outward* and *temporal* Blessings; such as *Health* of Body, and *Victory* over their Enemies, *Peace* among themselves, and with their *Neighbouring* Nations, *Plenty* of Bread, and the *Conveniences* of Life, and *Success* and *Prosperity* in all their Affairs; and therefore the *Author* to the *Hebrews* calls the *Gospel* the bringing in of a *better Hope*, and upon this Account opposes it to the Law of *Moses*, *Heb.* 7. 19. which plainly implies that *that* Law brought in no *better Hope* than that of a *temporal* Happiness; and those Words of the Apostle, *Gal.* 3. 12. *The Law is not of Faith; but the Man that doth them, shall live in them*, do plainly seem to imply this Sense. The Law proposing only *present* and *sensible* Blessings to such as do it, such as that *Thou shalt live a happy and prosperous Life in this World*, doth not require Faith properly so called, which is the *Evidence of things not seen*; that is. of the *invisible* Blessings of the *other* Life; and *v.* 21. he plainly asserts, that if there had been any *other* Law besides the *Gospel* that could have given that *promised* Life, *Righteousness* would have been by *that* Law; and therefore since, as he asserts, *Righteousness* was by no *other* Law but the *Gospel*, it follows that no *other* Law, no not that of *Moses*, could give or promise Life *eternal*. Not that I make the *least* doubt, but good Men under the Law of *Moses* did firmly believe a *future* Happiness; for this the very *Heathens* themselves had very great Hopes and Expectations of, tho' they never had so much Reason as the *Jews* to induce them to believe: For, besides all those *weighty* Arguments which were *common* to them with the *Heathens*, they had those *general Evangelical* Promises which *God* made to the *Patriarchs* of being *their* God, and their exceeding great Reward; the Histories of the Translations of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, and of sundry most eminent Examples of *God's* exceeding Love to Goodness and good Men, from whence they might easily infer, that sure he had better Rewards in store for them than any of the transitory Blessings of this Life, especially when they saw how many good Men were deprived of these, and left *naked* and *destitute* of all worldly Comforts: Besides all which, in every Age they had Prophets that were divinely inspired, and who, among all the Secrets that were revealed to them, cannot be supposed to have been wholly unacquainted with the *typical* Meaning of their Ceremonies and Polity, which among other things presignified the *glorious* Re-compences of the Life to come. But however they came by it, I think it is very apparent from sundry Passages in the *Book of Psalms*, *Ezekiel* and *Daniel*, that they

they were far from being Strangers to the Doctrine of a *blessed* Immortality *hereafter*; though I think it is very apparent from what hath been said, that they did not derive their Belief of this Doctrine from any express Promise of their Law. But yet it is very apparent, that though they were not altogether unacquainted with it, yet 'twas never so clearly discovered to them by the *Eternal Word*, as it was afterwards to *us* by the *Word Incarnate*, since, as the *Apostle* tells us, *He brought Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel*: For therein he hath most clearly promised it to us, and as far as humane Language can express, explained and unfolded its Nature; and by his own Resurrection, and Ascension into *Heaven*, hath given us a *clear* and *visible* Demonstration of its Truth and Reality; so that now the Existence of it is become as certain to us, as it's possible for a *Matter of Fact* to be; and we cannot be more infallibly assured of it than we are, unless we had been personally in *Heaven*, and had there surveyed its Glories with our own Eyes. Well therefore may he be said to have dwelt among us *full of Grace*, since he was graciously pleased to make us such express Promises of future Happiness, and give us such ample Assurance of its Reality and Existence. And so I have done with the first Note of Distinction between Christ's dwelling among *us*, and his dwelling in the *Mosaick Tabernacle*: He dwelt among us *full of Grace*.

2. The *other* Character by which his dwelling among *us* is distinguished from his dwelling in the *Mosaick Tabernacle*, is this, that he dwelt among us *full of Truth*. It's plain that *Truth* here is not to be understood as opposed to *Falshood*, because in that Sense it is no Note of Distinction between these *two* Dwellings or Tabernacles of *Christ*, unless we suppose that he did falsely dwell, or act, and represent *God* in the Tabernacle of *Moses*, which would be to blaspheme his Truth and Veracity. *Truth* therefore must here be understood as opposed to *Obscurity* and *Shadow*, and so must denote *Clearness* and *Reality*, as it very commonly doth. As when we say a Picture is not a *true* Man, we do not charge the Picture with a Lie; if it could speak indeed, and should call it self a Man, we should then say it were a *lying* Picture for pretending to be what it is not being only a *silent* Resemblance of him. Thus when the *Apostle* saith, *He dwelt among us full of Truth*, and thereby distinguishes his tabernacling among *us* from the manner of his dwelling among the *Jews*, it is not so to be understood as if he had dwelt among them in a *false* or *lying* manner, or that *that* Representation which he made to them of *God* and *Divine* Things were *false* and *imposturous*; no, *God* forbid: But thus, whereas when he inhabited the Tabernacle, he was *full of Hieroglyphicks*, or *mystical* Representations, which though they were *true* Pictures or *Shadows* of *Divine* Things, yet have not the Truth and Reality of the Things themselves in them, and consequently would be Lies and Cheats, should they pretend to be what they only represent; but now he is come to dwell among us, he is *full* of the Things themselves, of those *Realities* which formerly he only gave us the *Types* and *Shadows* of; now he hath removed all that Scene of Pictures and *mystical* Representations, and brought the Things themselves upon the *Stage*, and exposed them *naked* to the View of the World. So that *now* he doth not entertain *us*, as *heretofore* he did the *Jews*, with *Emblems* and *Shadows*, but with Truth, and the *real* Substances of Things. And thus the Word is very frequently taken in the *New Testament*: Thus, *Heb.* 8. 2. the *Christian Church* is called the *true Tabernacle*, in Contradistinction to the *Tabernacle of Moses*; not as if *that* were a *false* Tabernacle, but a *typical* one, it being designed only as a Shadow of the *Christian Church*, which is the *true* Reality and Substance which was pictured and represented in it; for so the *Apostle* himself explains it, *Heb.* 9. 24 *For Christ*, saith he, *is not entred into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into Heaven it self*: From whence it's plain, that therefore those *Holy Places* are opposed to *true Places*, because they were only Figures, or *mystical* Representations of something that is *real* and *substantial*. So, *Dan.* 7. 16. when *Daniel* desired to know the Truth of that *Prophetic Scene*, it is said, that *One stood by, and made him know the Interpretation of the things*; that is, what was the Reality and

and Substance that was represented in those Types and Figures. So here, *He dwelt among us full of Truth*; that is, when he dwelt among us he was full of the Substance and Reality of those things which before he was wont to represent by *obscure Emblems and Shadows*; now he presents to us the Things themselves, and not the *mystical Types and Figures* of them, as formerly he was wont to do. For I think it's very evident, that the *whole Model of the Jewish Polity* was purposely contrived to be an *Emblem and Representation of the Gospel*; and that the *main Reason of those numerous Rites and Ceremonies*, was to delineate and shadow out the *g'orious Mysteries of Christianity*: For the Apostle plainly tells us, that they were all a *shadow of things to come*, and that *the Body* or Substance of that Shadow, was *Jesus Christ*. Col. 2. 17. And the Author to the *Hebrews* calls them *the Patterns of the things in Heaven*, or the *heavenly Things*; by which it's plain he means *Christ*, or the Subjects of the Kingdom of *Christ*, since he tells us that as it was *necessary* that those Patterns should be purified with Blood, so it was *necessary* that those *Heavenly Things* represented by them, should be purified by a *better Sacrifice*, Heb. 9. 23. And what other *Heavenly Things* are there but only *Christians* that are purified with this *better Sacrifice* of *Christ*? And in another place the same Author tells us, that *the Law hath in it a Shadow of good things to come*, Heb. 10. 1. And thus very frequently in the *New Testament*, the *sacred Rites of the Mosaick Law* are declared to be Types and Shadows of the *Mysteries of the Gospel*, as particularly in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, which is almost wholly spent upon this Argument. And this the *Jews* themselves seem to be acquainted with long before the Publication of the *Gospel*: For so the most ancient *Jews* look'd upon the Temple as a Type and Figure of the *Heavenly State*; and *Philo the Jew*, in his *Allegories of the Law*, and almost in all his other Writings, makes the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Mosaick Law* to be Types and Figures of some *Divine or Moral Truth*, and particularly the *High Priest* to be an *Emblem of the Eternal Word*, and his Crown and Vestments to be Representations of his Authority and *Divine Perfections*, wherein he exactly agrees with the Author to the *Hebrews*. And from *sundry Passages in the Book of Psalms* it seems evident, that the *good Jews* had a Prospect beyond the *Outside and Letter* of the Law, even into the *typical Sense and Meaning* of it; and that through its *glimmering Shadows and Resemblances*, they beheld very much of the Substance and Realities of the *Gospel*: For hence probably was that of *David*, Psalm 25. 14. *The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*; for certainly the *Secret of the Lord* here cannot be meant the *Fore knowledge of future Events*, since under the *Old Testament* that was neither restrained to *good Men*, nor much less was it universally with them that feared *God*; and therefore it seems more probable, that by it we are to understand those *then secret Mysteries of the Gospel*, which were so obscurely represented in the Types and Figures of the *Law*; especially if we compare this with that Prayer of *David*, Psalm 119. 18. *Open thou mine Eyes that I may behold the wondrous things out of thy Law*; which methinks plainly intimates that the *good Man* did believe there were some *wondrous Mysteries* contained under those *dark and typical Representations*: And afterwards, v. 27. *Make me to understand the way of thy Precepts, so shall I talk of thy wondrous Works*; which implies that he believed that there were some Things very *mystical and hard* to be understood contained within the Precepts of their Law, which in their *literal Sense* were *easy and obvious*, and had nothing of Depths or Mystery in them; and therefore certainly had he not seen something within them beyond their *Ring and Outside*, he would never have prayed so earnestly as he doth, that *God would teach him his Laws*, and that *he would not hide from him his Commandments*, as he doth, v. 19. much less would he have imagined that by *understanding of them* he should be enabled to talk of such *wondrous Things*. Afterwards, v. 69. he tells us, that *he had seen an end of all Perfection, but God's Commandments are exceeding broad*; which denotes that he who had seen an End of all Things else, had discovered so vast and boundless a Depth in the Commands of *God*, that he could see no End of it; whereas it's plain, that the *literal Meaning* of them was very nar-

row and contracted, and far from being so exceeding *broad*; which argues that the good Man had discovered under the Letter and Surface of them, a Myne of *mystical* Sense which he could not reach the Bottom of, and that God had given him a Glimps of those *glorious* Secrets of the Gospel which he had wrapt up, and involved in the *typical* Precepts of the Law. Thus the *Eternal Word* while he tabernacled among the Jews, revealed his Gospel to them by *Types* and *Shadows*, and *mystical Representations* of it, which, though it was very *obscure* and *imperfect*, yet seems to have been the *best* and *clearest* that the *present State* of that People could admit of. For it seems plain by the History of the Jews, that they were naturally a very *rude* and *untractable* People, and doubtless they were never worse than when they came out of the Land of *Egypt*, where their *bad Temper* was doubtless very much improved by those *gross* Idolatries in which they had been educated; so that being *bad* themselves, and also extremely *debauched* by the *wicked Manners* of the *Egyptians*, it is not to be supposed that they were Subj^{ts} capable of the Heights and Purities of *Religion*; for if from the *Depth* of *Immorality*, whereinto they were sunk, God should have immediately strained them up to the *highest Pitch* of *Gospel Purity*, in all Probability they would never have born it; but like the Strings of a *Musical Instrument*, being wound *too high*, would have been apt to crack and fly in pieces, and wholly to revolt from God into those *gross* Idolatries which yet they were hardly weaned from, and which were still so *suitable* to their Genius and Temper. So that as yet there was so great a Gulph between *them* and the Gospel, that 'twas hardly possible either for them to go to *that*, or for *that* to come to *them*. And therefore as God in his own *high Wisdom* hath placed a *Twilight* between the Night and the Morning to secure our Sight lest our *weak Eyes* should be dazzled by a *too sudden* Irruption of the *Broad day's Glory*; so did he deal with the Jews: He thought it not *convenient* immediately to post them out of *utter Darkness* into *perfect Light*, but first interposes a *less pure Religion* as a *Medium* or *Twilight* between the *Heathen* and the *Gospel State*, that so by *that* he might prepare their Sight for the Reception of a *more perfect* Splendor, and make them fit to entertain the *severer Purities* of the Gospel without being offended or dazzled with its Glory. But yet in Wisdom he hath so contrived and modelled this *less perfect Religion*, as to make it most *instructive* and *useful*, having so ordered its *sacred Rites* and *Ceremonies* as to make them *Representative* of the whole Method and *Oeconomy* of the Gospel; and tho' those *typical Representations* were very *obscure* and *dark*, so that the Gospel seemed to run under ground in the midst of those *Ceremonial Observances*, yet it frequently broke forth, and opened it self in the midst of them, and by degrees in the *Prophetick Age* did make it a larger Channel, till by its Force and Violence it did overthrow these Banks, that stood in its way, and overspread the Face of the whole Earth. So that it's plain that the Obscurity of those *typical Representations* did not render them wholly useless, since they were not so obscure, but those who were *good*, and *diligent*, and *serious* in the Study of them might be, and were instructed by them in whatsoever was *necessary* to make them *good* and *happy*. For tho' those *Types* had not a Mouth to speak out the Gospel, yet they had a Hand to point to it, they being as it were *rude Draughts* of that which was afterwards to be drawn to the *greatest* Life and Exactness; and this it's plain was understood by all *good Men*, whose Hearts were carried beyond the *outward Letter* of the Law, to the more *inward* and *spiritual* Meaning of it; wherein they discovered those *Evangelical Mysteries* that were *veiled* and *hidden* under the *outward Ceremonies*, which made up that true *Spiritual Cabala* which seems constantly to have been preserved among the *true Israelites*, and which afterwards was more largely commented on by the *Prophets* of the *succeeding Ages*, whose Care it was to unlock this *Cabala*, or *spiritual Sense* of the Law, and to raise up the Hearts of that People to a *higher Expectation* of the *great Things* which were to come. So that you see the State and Condition of the Jews would not admit of a plain Discovery of the Gospel to them, but required an *outward Ceremonial Religion*, that being most *accommodate* to their Genius and Temper; and there-

therefore though the *Eternal Word* for the present Exigence established such a *Religion* among them, yet he wisely framed and modelled it into a *typical Representation* of the *Gospel*, that so thereby he might prepare them for it, and so far instruct them in the Knowledge of it as was necessary to their Welfare and Happiness. And hence the *Apostle* tells the *Jews*, that *the Law was their School-master to bring them unto Christ*, that they might be justified by Faith, and that now after Faith was come, they were no longer under their *School-master*, Gal. 3. 4, 25. that is, while they were in their *Infantine, Childish State*, and incapable of a more perfect Institution, God set the Law as a *School-master* over them, that *that* by its *Types*, and *Pictures*, and *Emblems*, might gradually instruct them in the *Mysteries of Christ*, and the *Gospel*, that so when it was openly revealed they might be justified by the Belief of it; and therefore now since the *Gospel* was come, they were no longer under the Tutorage of that *School-master*, now they were no longer to learn *Christ* by *Types* and *mystical Representations*, since he himself was present with them, and had openly revealed those *Divine Mysteries* which under those *Types* were so obscurely adumbrated. So that you see the *Eternal Word* tabernacled among the *Jews* in a far different manner from what he did when he pitched his *Tabernacle* in our Natures; for when he tabernacled among them he was full of *Types*, and *Shadows*, and *mystical Emblems*; He instructed them in *Divine Things* by *Symbols*, and *obscure Representations*; but when he came to tabernacle among us, and our Natures, he was full of *Truth*, that is, of *Substance* and *Reality*: For then instead of the *Shadows* and *Pictures* of them, he exhibited to us the Things themselves; then he brought down the *Mysteries* of the *Gospel* out of that *Cloud of Types* in which they were before involved, and set them before us in a *clear and open Light*.

But that I may more fully demonstrate this to you, I shall briefly give you some particular Instances of his dwelling, or conversing among us full of *Truth*, in Contradistinction to that *obscure typical Way* of his conversing or tabernacled among the *Jews*; which I shall rank under these four Heads:

1. His *Personal Transactions*.
2. The *Purity and Spirituality* of his Laws.
3. The *Condition and Quality* of his Kingdom.
4. The *Rewards and Recompences* which he promises to his Subjects.

1. One great Instance of his conversing among us full of *Truth*, in Contradistinction to that *obscure and typical Way* of his conversing among the *Jews*, is his own *Personal Transactions*. The *Eternal Word* being to assume our Natures, thought fit to give the *Jews*, whilst he tabernacled among them, a *Specimen* or *Pattern* of those glorious Things he was to transact in his *Incarnate State*; and this he did chiefly by the *High Priest*, and those *Expiatory Sacrifices* which he ordained and instituted among them, as you may find it demonstrated at large in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*. For as to the *High Priest*, he was to be called, and ordained of God, Heb. 5. 4. in which the *Eternal Word* represented to them his Commission from the Father, to descend into the World as his *Embassador* to Men. Secondly, He was to be born of a Woman that came a pure *Virgin* into the Arms of his Father, Levit. 21. 14. in which he seems to represent to them his own pure Nativity of a *Virgin Mother*. Thirdly, He was to be washed with Water, and his Flesh and Loins were to be covered with the whitest and the cleanest Linnen, Exod. 29. 7. and 28. 42. by which Christ typified to them the *IMMACULATE* Sanctity and Innocence of his humane Life. Fourthly, He was to be clothed in the most glorious Garments that could possibly be made by the most excellent Workmen, Exod. 28. 2, 3. which seems to denote the Majesty of Christ's Person, and those glorious Works by which he render'd himself so illustrious in the World. Fifthly, The Colours of the Embroideries of his Garment being blue, purple, scarlet, and white, seem to denote the Truth of his Prophetick Office, the Majesty of his Royal, the Perfection of his Priestly, and his Innocence and Sanctity in the Execution of them all.

Sixthly, He wore a *holy Crown* on his Head, and a *Plate* on his Forehead engraven with *Holiness*; which denotes the *Divine* Authority of *Christ*, and the *Sacredness* and *Divinity* of his Person. And *Seventhly*, Upon his Breast he wore the *Urim* and *Thummim*, in which was prefigured the *Height* and *Purity* of *Christ's* Doctrine, and the *Holiness* and *Perfection* of his Laws. In a Word, the *High Priest* was to offer Sacrifice for the Sins of the People, on the *great Day of Expiation*, which Sacrifice was to be a *Beast without blemish* voluntarily presented at the Door of the Tabernacle, whither the *High Priest* being come, he was to strip off his *glorious* Garment, to lay his Hand on the Head of the Beast, and to confess the Peoples Sins over it, and then to slay the Beast, and carry some of the Blood of it within the *Vail*, and sprinkle it upon, and before the *Mercy-Seat*, by which he is said to make an Atonement for their Sins; that is, to obtain Authority from God to bless and pardon: In which the *Eternal Word* gives us a plain Representation of his *future Sacrifice* upon *Earth*, and *Intercession* in *Heaven*; for he being both our *Sacrifice* and *High Priest*, did freely divest himself of the Glory and Dignity of his *Humane Nature*, and offer up himself to die for us; by which he laid his Hand as it were upon his own *spotless* and *immaculate* Head, did as our *Representative* acknowledge what we had deserved, that for our Sins we have justly merited to die *for ever* by the Hand of *God*, even as He for our sakes did submit to die by the Hand of *Man*: And having performed this *bloody Sacrifice*, he enters into *Heaven*, which is the true *Holy of Holies*, and there by the Oblation of his Blood and Obedience, makes an Atonement for our Sins, and obtains Authority from his Father to pardon and receive into Favour every truly *penitent* Offender in the World. Thus you see how the *Personal Transactions* of our *Saviour* were under the Law of *Moses* represented in *mystical* Types and Figures; but when he came to tabernacle among us, he did all *that* which before he only represented: He actually came down from the Father to us, was born of the *Holy Virgin*, lived a most *holy* and *innocent* Life, died a *Sacrifice* for our Sins, and is gone into *Heaven* to intercede for us: So that now instead of *Types* and *Figures*, we have the *Substances* and *Realities* that were obscurely shadowed and represented in them.

2. Another *great* Instance of his conversing among us *full of Truth*, is the *Purity* and *Spirituality* of his Laws. It's *apparent* that those which he gave to the *Jews*, according to the *literal* Sense of them, did only oblige them to an *External Obedience*; and therefore *St. Paul* calls the whole Law a *carnal Commandment*, *Heb. 7. 16.* and the Precepts of it he calls *carnal Ordinances imposed upon them till the time of Reformation, Heb. 9. 10.* But yet it is *apparent* that by these *carnal Ordinances* the *Eternal Word* did designedly *typify* and represent that *internal Purity* of Soul which the *Evangelical Law* doth exact: For he seeing that the *Jews* were not only a *perverse* but also a *dull* and *stupid* People, as those generally are who are born and bred in Slavery, and that therefore they were *incapable* of *sublime* and *spiritual* Precepts, and would be apt to forget *plain* ones, He therefore thought it most proper and suitable to their Capacity and Genius to instruct them by *sensible* and *material* Signs, even as Parents do sometimes teach their Children by Pictures; for of this his Condescension to their Dulness and Capacity, the Prophet *Isaiab* takes notice, *Chap. 28. 10, 11.* where he saith, that he gave them *precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little with a stammering tongue*; that is, he look'd upon them as Children, and so condescended to their Weakness, and spoke to them in their *own* Dialect. And this Way of instructing them by *outward* and *visible* Signs was the most *probable* to take effect, because it was much in use in the *Eastern Countries*, but more especially in *Egypt*, whose Manners they were infinitely fond of, to wrap up their most *excellent* Precepts in *Hieroglyphicks*, which were nothing but Pictures and *material* Signs, by which they represented their *Divine* and *Moral* Institutions. Thus therefore by such *visible* Signs and Pictures, the *Eternal Word* instructed them in the Rules of *internal* Purity and Goodness; so by *Circumcision* he signified to them the Circumcision of their Hearts; and by their *several Washings*, Purity from *Hypocrisy* and *Sensuality*;

Sensuality; yea this was probably the Intent of that Difference of *Meats*, as St. Barnabas in his Epistle tells us, that Swines Flesh was pronounc'd *unclean*, to instruct them not to live like *Hogs* that clamour when they are *hungry*, and forget their Masters when they are *full*; that *Eagles*, and such *ravenous Birds* were forbidden to be eat, to teach them that those who live not by *Industry*, but *Rapine*, are *abominable*; that *Fish without Scales*, which generally dwell in the Mud, were all pronounced *unclean*; to teach them the Evil of *Sensuality*, and *Earthly-mindedness*! Thus by these *outward Signs* his Intent was to insinuate into them *internal Purity of Mind*; and this was very well understood by those who were *good and wise* among them: Hence we find *David* gives very *high Encomiums* of the Law, *Psal. 19. 7, 8. The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul, making wise the simple; rejoycing the Heart, enlightning the Eyes, &c.* which Characters are proper only to that *inward and spiritual Sense* of the Law that was *decyphered* upon those *outward Signs and Ceremonies*. Which Sense seems to have been very little taken notice of by the *sottish Vulgar*; for only the Ceremony it self was Matter of Law to them, which if they observed they were not *punishable* by that Law, though they never took notice of its *spiritual Sense and Meaning*. which made them neglect that *inward Purity* which was pictured on those *outward Signs*, and place the whole of their Righteousness in an *outside ceremonious Pagantry*. Hence is that of St. Paul, *2 Cor. 3. 13, 14, 15. I used, saith he, great plainness of Speech: And not as Moses, which put a Vail over his Face, that the Children of Israel could not stedfastly look unto the end of that which is abolished. But their Minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same Vail untaken away, in the reading the Old Testament; which Vail is done away in Christ: By which Vail he means those outward Shadows and Types in which the mystical Sense of the Law was wrapt and involved; and it seems they were so taken with the Pomp and Gaiety of the outside, that they never minded that rich Treasure of Sense that was contained within it, and which the Apostle here calls the end of that which is abolished; yea, to this day, saith he, the Vail of outward Ceremonies stands so much in their Light that they cannot discern the internal Sense of the Old Testament; but now, saith he, it is done away by Christ. Now that the Eternal Word hath pitched his Tabernacle in our Nature, those outward Types wherein this inward Purity of Soul was so obscurely intimated, are vanished like Clouds before the Sun, and in their room are introduced the most pure and spiritual Laws of the Gospel, which are no longer couched in Types and Ceremonial Shadows, but in plain and naked Propositions. Now internal Holiness is palpably declared to be the great Design of Religion, that we should cleanse our selves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and perfect Holiness in the fear of God. This therefore is another Instance of Christ's tabernacling among us full of Truth, viz. the Purity and Spirituality of his Laws, which heretofore he mystically represented to the Jews by outward Rites and Ceremonies.*

3. Another Instance of his tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, in Contradistinction to that *obscure typical Way* of his conversing among the Jews, is the Condition and Quality of his Church and Kingdom. The *Eternal Word*, designing to erect a *glorious Kingdom* in the World, drew as it were a *rude Scheme* or *Draught* of it in the Form and Model of the *Jewish Polity*. For first he erects a Kingdom among them of which himself was King, to typify that *Spiritual Kingdom* which afterwards he meant to establish in the World; then he adopts the Jews to be his Children by the *external Sign of Circumcision*, who are therefore called a *Holy Seed*, which was an Emblem of that *Holy Seed* which afterwards he designed to beget to himself by *spiritual Regeneration*. which is therefore called the *Circumcision of the Heart, whose Praise is not of Men, but of God*. His delivering them from the Bondage of *Egypt*, and leading them through the *Red-Sea* and the Wilderness into *Canaan*, typified his delivering of his *future Church* from the Bondage of Sin and Satan, and leading it by his own *gracious Presence* through the *Red Sea* of Blood, and Persecutions, and the Wilderness of the World to the *Canaan of eternal Rest*. His giving the Law on *Mount Sinai* in

Fire,

Fire, was a Figure of his delivering the *Gospel* by the Spirit, which came down in *fiery cloven Tongues* at the *Feast of Pentecost*. Thus his erecting the Ark in the Wilderness was also *another* Type of that *Spiritual Kingdom* which afterwards he meant to erect in the World. The *divers* Ornaments and Instruments of that Tabernacle represented the Diversity of *spiritual* Gifts and Functions in the *Christian Church*; its being covered with Skins *without*, and adorned with Gold *within*, shadowed the *mean* and *contemptible* Form wherein the *Christian Church* first appeared to the World, notwithstanding the *inward* Glory and Purity with which it was adorned and embellished. The Glory of *God* appearing in the Tabernacle, denoted the Presence of *Christ* in his Church, which he hath promised to continue to the End of the World; its being removed from Place to Place, and finding no Rest till it was lodged in the Temple, prefigured the *persecuted* State of the *Primitive Church*, which was hunted *up* and *down* the World by the mighty *Nimrods* of the Earth, and could find no Rest till it was transported to the *Heavenly* Temple. By these and such like *Types* and *Shadows* did the *Eternal Word* prefigure the State and Condition of his *future Church*, that so when it came to be erected in the World, the *Jews* might know and own it, having seen it before-hand so exactly *decyphered* and *adumbrated* in the very Frame and Model of their *own* Polity. But when he came to tabernacle in our Nature he gave *actual* Being to those Things which before he only *shadowed* and *represented*; for then he erected this *glorious Church*, of which the *Jewish* was only a Model and Platform, delivered it from the *Egyptian* Bondage of Wickedness and Idolatry, and by his own *glorious* Presence conducted the Members of it through all the Persecutions of an *enraged* World, to the *Canaan* of *eternal Rest*; and therefore this also is *another plain* Instance of his tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, the State and Condition of his Church, which before was so obscurely represented.

4. And Lastly, *Another* Instance of his tabernacling among us *full of Truth*, in Contradistinction to that *obscure* and *typical* Way of his conversing among the *Jews*, is the *glorious* Recompences which he hath so plainly and clearly promised to his Subjects. For this he also obscurely *typified* to the *Jews*; for, as I have already hinted, by that *Canaan* which he bestowed upon them after their *tedious* Travel through the Wilderness, he did darkly represent to them that *Canaan above* flowing with *infinite* Delights, which he hath promised to bestow upon his *faithful* Servants after they have pass'd through the Wilderness of this World. So also by their *Sabbaoths*, and especially their *Year of Jubilee*, wherein they were to rest from all their Labours, and keep a *perpetual* Festivity, He did obscurely *decypher* to them that *Sabbaoth of Rest*, and *Jubilee* of *endless* Pleasure which *vertuous* Souls shall enjoy in *Heaven* after they have finished their Labours here on *Earth*, as you may see at large, *Heb.* 4. Now by these and such like *Shadows* of their Law, which possibly the Prophets by *Divine* Inspiration might expound to them, those who were *wise* and *good* among them, it is very probable, were instructed in the Article of *eternal* Life. Hence it may be might arise that *famous* Controversy among the *Jews* concerning the *Written* and *Oral* Law, which they call the *Cabala*, or the Law by Tradition; not that this *traditional* contained any thing that was not in the *written* Law, but because those things which were obscurely contained in the *Types* of the *written* Law were explained and interpreted in this their *Traditional* Law. But it is *apparent* that the *Types* of *eternal* Life were not fully explained in this *traditional* Law till after the *Babylonish* Captivity, after which the Prophet *Daniel*, and after him *Ezekiel* began to speak more plainly of the *Resurrection of the Dead*; and from that Time forwards the Doctrine of the *Resurrection* and *eternal* Life, began to be more openly taught among the *Common People* till about the Time of the *Maccabees*, when it was brought forth into the Light from under those *Types* in which it was so obscurely represented, and became a Principle even of the *Popular Religion*, and an Article of the *Jewish Faith*, as plainly appears from the Records of those Times, particularly *2 Macc.* 7. 23, 26. compared with *Heb.* 11. 35. And indeed it was very *necessary* that then this Article should be more clearly revealed

to fortify the *Jews* against those many Persecutions whereunto they were exposed for the sake of their *Religion*, that they might not be terrified to *apostatize* from it by those *cruel* Martyrdoms which in the Time of the *Maccabees* they many of them endured; and besides, now the Time of the *Gospel* was approaching, and consequently its Mysteries, like the Light of the *rising* Sun, began to break forth *clearer* and *clearer* from under that Cloud of *Types* wherein it was wrapt and involved, till at last the *Sun of Righteousness* himself arose and dispersed those Clouds, and brought *Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel*. But as for the *Sadduces*, who give no heed to the *Cabala*, or *Traditional Law*, in which this Doctrine was first discovered, and adhered only to the *written Law of Moses*, they still continued Infidels in this Point, and believed neither *Angels* nor *Spirits*, nor the *Life to come*: So very obscurely was it represented in the *Types* and *Shadows* of the *Written Law*. But when once the *Eternal Word* came to tabernacle in our *Flesh*, he revealed this *great Article* so plainly and clearly to the World, that 'tis impossible for any one not to believe it that believes him to be the *Messias*, or *incarnate Word*.

And thus you see by all these Instances what a *vast* Difference there was in respect of *Truth*, between Christ's tabernacled in our Nature, and in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. And now I shall conclude this Argument with two or three *practical* Inferences.

1st, He dwelt or tabernacled among us.] From hence I infer the *high* Authority of *Christ*, and that *Holy Religion* which he hath revealed to us. For to tabernacle among us, as I have already shewed you, signifies to dwell in the midst of, as the *Shechinah*, *Presence*, or *Representative* of the most *High God*, as one that acted in his Father's Person, and was vested with his Authority, and consequently as one who hath as *great* a Right to exact our Obedience as the *Eternal Father* himself, should he have come down from *Heaven* in his own Person to give *Laws* to Mankind. For so when the *Eternal Word* went before the Camp of *Israel* as the *Shechinah*, or *Angel of God's Presence*, God requires them that they should obey him as himself; *Beware of him, and obey his Voice*, saith God; *provoke him not, for he will not pardon your Transgression, for my Name is in him*, *Exod. 23. 21. and v. 22.* To obey the Voice of this *Angel* is interpreted to be the same thing, as to obey the Voice of the most *High God* himself; *But if thou shalt indeed obey his Voice*, saith God, *and do all that I speak then I will be an Enemy to thy Enemies*, &c. So that for the *Israelites* to disobey this *Angel* (who, as I have proved to you, was the *Eternal Word*, or *Representative* of the most *High God* to them) was to all Intents and Purposes the same Thing as if they had disobeyed the most *High* himself. And accordingly our *Saviour* tells the *Jews*, *He that believeth on me, believeth not on me but on the Father that sent me*; that is, he doth not merely believe on me, but on the Father too, whose Authority I have, and whose Person I represent; for so he explains himself in the following Verse, *He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me*; that is, I being my Father's *Shechinah*, or *Representative*, *John 12. 44, 45.* And therefore as every Contempt of the *Deputy*, or *Vice Governor*, is an Affront to the *Sovereign Prince* whose Person he bears, and by whose Authority he acts; so every Rebellion against *Christ* is an open Defiance to the *Sovereign God* whose Person he represents, and by whose Authority he reigns. Hence our *Saviour* tells the *Jews*, *John 5. 23.* that *He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him*; which plainly intimates that *God the Father* resents those Indignities which we offer to *Christ* and his *Laws*, as if they were done to his own Person, and that if himself should speak to us from the Battlements of *Heaven*, or proclaim his *Law* to us in a *Voice of Thunder*, he would not be more displeased to hear us openly declare that we will not obey him, than he is to see us trample upon the *Laws* of his *Son* which he hath stamp'd with his own *Sovereign Authority*. So that if we were not infinitely *fool-hardy*, methinks we should never dare to violate our *Religion*, in which the Authority of the most *High God* is so immediately concerned. For whatsoever our *Religion* requires of us, it requires in his Name who hath

hath an *undoubted* Right and Authority to command us; for from all *Eternity* he was invested with an *absolute* and *unlimited* Power of doing any thing that is not *unbecoming* his *Divine* Perfections, and in this the Right of his Dominion over us is originally founded. For he that hath Power must needs have a Right to exercise it so far as it is *just* and *becoming* his Nature, otherwise his Power would be altogether in vain; and therefore since *God* from all *Eternity* hath a Power of doing whatsoever he pleases so far as is *consistent* with his Holiness and Goodness, there is nothing can be pretended against the Right of his Dominion and Authority over us: For *God* cannot but have an *eternal* Right to exercise his own Power, and he cannot but have an *immutable* Right to exercise it over his own Creatures. And as from all *Eternity* he had Power to do whatsoever was *just* and *becoming* him, so from his creating of us it became most *just* and *becoming* that he should rule and govern us; for we became *his* as soon as we were created by him; all our Powers of Action were from him, and by that he hath acquired an *unalienable* Right in whatsoever we are able to do. We have nothing but what is *his* Gift, and therefore can do nothing but what is *his* Debt; we received *all* from him, and therefore must owe *all* to him; for by Right of Creation he is the *supreme* Proprietor of all our Powers and Faculties, and as such hath a *just* Claim to all the Homage and Obedience that we are able to render him. So that as *God's* Dominion over us is originally founded in his most *absolute* Power to do whatsoever is *just* and *becoming* him; so the Justice and Becomingness of his Dominion over us doth immediately result from his creating of us, by which he hath *for ever* intitled himself to all the Obedience we can render him. And by Virtue of this *immutable* Title doth he claim our Obedience to the Laws of *Jesus Christ*, whom next to himself he hath made our Prince and Ruler, having vested him with his own *Sovereign* Authority, and constituted him his *supreme* Representative in the Church. So that by disobeying his Laws we incur the Guilt of the most *monstrous* Injustice in the World; we resume our selves from *him* to whom we owe our Being, and refuse to own *our selves* to be his Creatures from whose Bounty we receive even the Power of rebelling against him; we alienate our Faculties from those *sacred* Uses whereunto they were designed and consecrated, and turn these *living* Temples of *God* into Dens of *impure* Thoughts and *filthy* Lusts; In a Word, we fight against *God* with his *own* Gifts, and arm the Effects of his Bounty against his *Sovereign* Authority. And what do we think will be the Consequence of these Things? Can we be so *sottish* as to imagine that the *Almighty* Father will sit above in the *Heavens*, and see how his Laws are trampled upon, his Authority contemned, and exposed to Scorn and Derision by a Company of *impious* Wretches that owe their very Beings to him, and never be concerned at it? Do we think him so *stupid* a Being as that no Provocations will awake his Vengeance, that he will *for ever* sit *unconcerned* with his Hands in his Bosom whilst his *violated* Laws, like the *Souls* under the Altar, are continually crying out to him, *How long, O Lord, holy and true! Dost thou not avenge our Quarrel upon the Heads of these audacious Rebels that every day trample us under foot, and have no more regard for our Authority than they have for the Whistling of the Wind!* For *God's* sake, Sirs, let us consider before it be *too* late what is like to become of us, what *probable* Hopes of Security we can propose to *our selves* if we persist in this *unjust* Rebellion. Gird up your Loins like Men, and I will demand of you in the Name of *God*, do you think that the *wise* Governour of the World will be *for ever* *insensible* of all the *rude* Affronts and Provocations you offer him? If so, pray where is his *Wisdom*, or in what Sense doth he govern the World, if he takes no care to secure his Laws by *punishing* Offenders, and lets his Subjects alone to do as they list? Or have you an Arm as *strong* as *God's*? Can you grapple with his *Almighty* Vengeance, or withstand the Stroke of his Thunderbolts? Sure such a *ridiculous* Conceit can never enter into any *reasonable* Breast? And if not, in the Name of *God* what do you propose to *your selves* when you can neither hope for Favour from *God*, nor Security from *your selves*? Are you so *abandoned* of all your Reason as wilfully to shut your Eyes against your Danger, and

run the *desperate* Venture of falling into the Hands of the *living God* ? Hath not our *blessed Lord* most fairly warn'd us what we are to trust to ? Hath he not told us how he *values* his Laws, and how dreadfully he will *punish* the Transgression of them ? Hath he not most seriously protested to us, that unless we do *repent and amend*, he will never forgive us either in *this Life*, or *that to come* ; and that if we still persist in our *Rebellions*, he will at last banish us from his Presence *for ever*, and assign us our Portion with *Devils and damned Ghosts* in that Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone ? And hath he not taken it upon his Death that all this is true, when he so freely *sealed* his Doctrines with his Blood ? And now after all this, is it possible we should be so *senseless* as to think we can be *safe* in our Wickedness, when *God the Father* is enraged both in *Wisdom* and *Honour* to avenge it as an Affront to his Authority, and *God the Son* hath revealed his Father's Wrath from *Heaven* against all Unrighteousness and Ungodliness of Men ? And therefore as we value our own Safety, it concerns us either to submit to that *Divine Authority* which is stamp'd upon the Laws of our *Saviour*, or else to secure our selves of some Retreat or Sanctuary from that *Almighty Vengeance* which our Rebellion will certainly arm against us.

adly, He dwelt among us *full of Grace*.] Hence I infer what *mighty* Encouragement we have to serve and obey our *blessed Master*, who in his dwelling among us was *full* of every thing that can render his Service *lovely* or *desireable*, and abounded in all those *amiable* Graces that can oblige us to love and obey him. For what was there wanting in our *blessed Master* that any reasonable Subject can desire in his *Prince* and *Sovereign* ? Would he desire a Prince of a *sweet* and *gracious* Temper, one that is *full* of Love and Tenderness to his Subjects ? Such a one in the most *eminent* degree is our *blessed Lord* ; for how doth the History of his Conversation upon Earth abound with the Expressions of a most *sweet* and *loving* Temper ? For Love was the Principle of all his Actions, the Life and Soul of his Conversation, and in all that he did or spoke he made some new Discovery of his *unfeigned* Affection to the World ; for he *went about doing good*, and his whole Life was nothing but one *continued Act* of Charity to Mankind. For still you find him either *instructing* the *Ignorant*, or *reproving* the *Erroneous*, or *comforting* the *Dejected*, or *feeding* the *Hungry*, or *curing* the *Sick* and *Diseased*. From Morning to Night he was constantly engaged in *one good Action* or *other*, and the whole Race of his Life, like that of the Sun, was spent in *enlivening* or *enlightening* the World. So *endearing* was his Behaviour, that he obliged his very Enemies, and, when he had won them, treated them with all the Tenderness and Affection of a most *loving* Father towards his *dearest* Children. From all he conversed with he extorted Respect and Veneration, and none were able to resist the Charms of his *victorious* Love, but those whose Hearts were harder than the *neither* Millstone. But that I may convince you of the *infinite* Goodness and Tenderness of his Nature, I will give you but that *one Instance*, *Luke 19. 41*. And when he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it ; which, as you will see afterwards, was occasioned by the Fore-sight of its *approaching* Ruin and Destruction ; and yet at the same time he foresaw the Cruelties which those *barbarous* Villains were about to practise upon him, how they would scourge his Body with *knotty* Whips, and nail his Hands and Feet to the Cross, and thrust a Spear into his Heart ; he saw how they would *triumph* over his Misery, mock at his Calamity, and dance to the Musick of his *dying* Groans. And now one would have thought such a Prospect as this would have *for ever* enraged his Soul against them, and made him rejoyce to see that *sweeping* Destruction that was coming upon them ; but such was the *incomparable* Sweetness of his Temper, that while he *foresaw* them plotting his Ruin, he could not but sigh over *theirs* ; and while he beheld their Malice all *reeking* in his Blood, and sporting it self with his Torments and Agonies, yet at the Sense of their *approaching* Destruction his very Bowels *earned*, and his Heart *melted* with Commiseration, and he could not forbear weeping to think that those *curst* Instruments of all his Miseries must e're long be so *wretched* and *miserable* themselves, earnestly wishing that they who so

greedily thirsted for his Blood had known *in that their day the things which belong to their Peace*. And though one would have thought the *barbarous* Entertainment he met with here upon Earth would have *for ever* quenched all his Affection to Mankind, yet still it lives, and in despite of all the Affronts and Outrages he endured, burns as vigorously in his Breast as ever. So *unconquerable* was his Love to his Subjects, that all the *bloody* Cruelties they practised upon him, when they chased him out of the World, were never able to *alienate* his Heart and Affections from them; but after all their Cruelties he still retained his Fatherly Bowels towards them, and when he could endure their Torments no longer, breathed out his *loving* Soul in an *earnest* Prayer for their Pardon, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*. And now that he is in Heaven among *Angels* and *glorified Spirits*, where he cannot but remember how unkindly we treated him when he was upon *Earth*, and perhaps doth still bear upon his *glorified Body* those very Wounds which he received from our Hands, which one would think were *sufficient* to incense him against us *for ever*; yet his Heart is the *same* towards us, *full* of all those *kind* and *tender* Resentments that first brought him down from Heaven, and render'd his Conversation among us so *full* of Sweetness and Endearments. And now being so infinitely kind as he is, why should we be disheartned from serving him? Methinks the Sense of his Love to us, if there were no *other* Argument in the World, should be *sufficient* to bind us to his Service *for ever*. For, *O my Soul, how can I do too much for so kind a Friend! How can I be too submissive to so good a Master! that is so infinitely tender of all his Servants, and loves them a thousand times more than they love themselves!* Sure if we had any Spark of Ingenuity in us, the Sense of his *matchless* Kindness towards us, would be *sufficient* to turn all our Duty to him into Recreation, to make us thirst after his Service, and catch at all Opportunities of expressing our Loyalty and Obedience to him: We should embrace his Commands as Preferments to us, and wear them as the *greatest Favours*, and think our selves more *honoured* in being the Servants of *Jesus Christ*, than in being made *mighty Kings* and *Potentates*.

2. Consider, as he is *full* of Grace, in respect of his own *Personal* Disposition, so he is also in respect of his Laws, in which, as I have already shewed you, he requires nothing of us but what is for our *Good*, nothing but what tends to the Perfection of our Natures, and the Consummation of our Happiness. All that our *Saviour* requires at our Hands, is only that we should act according to the Laws of a *Reasonable Nature*, and constantly pursue the great End of our Creation, which can never be obtained by us, unless we regulate our Actions by those *wise* and *excellent* Rules which he hath prescribed us, and which he hath prescribed us upon no *other* Inducement, but only to oblige us to be *happy*. For as to any Advantage that will accrue to him from our Actions, 'tis altogether *indifferent* to him whether we obey him or no; for he was always infinitely *happy* within himself, and would have always been so, tho' we had never had a Being; so that his Felicity depends not upon us; and were it not that the *superabundant* Goodness of his Nature doth *for ever* incline him to make us *happy* as well as *himself*, he would never have concerned himself about us, but would have let us alone to do as we list, and abandoned us to the Fate of *our own* Actions. He therefore being infinitely *happy* within himself, can have no self-ends to serve upon his Creatures; because within the Circle of his own *divine* Being, he hath all that he needs, and all that he desires; but being infinitely *good*, as he is infinitely *happy*, we are sure that our Good must be the only End of his intermeddling with our Actions, and his giving Laws to direct them. And if we consult the *particular* Laws which he hath given us, we shall find they all of them most naturally tend to *perfect* and *rectify* our *disordered* Natures, to *exalt* and *spiritualize* our Affections, and inspire us with all those *divine* Dispositions that are requisite to qualify us for the Happiness of the World to come. And now methinks, if we had any Sense of *our own* Interest, this Consideration should mightily encourage us to Obedience, to think that while we are serving our *blessed Master*, we are serving our

our selves to the *best* Purposes, and that his Service, and our Interest are so combined and united, that by the same Actions we may gratify *him*, and do *our selves* the *greatest* Kindness in the World; that he exacts nothing from us, but what he was obliged to do by the *infinite* Care and Concern he hath for us; and that he had been less *kind*, should he have required *less*, and must necessarily have subtracted from us some Degree of our Happiness, should he have abated us any Part of our Duty. O *Blessed Jesus*, who can complain of thy Service, when thy very Commands are Tokens of thy Love; when all the Duty thou requirest of us, is only to be *kind* to *our selves* in doing those things, which, if thou hadst never commanded, *our own* Interest would have obliged us to, had we but understood it as well, or regarded it as much as thou dost?

3. But then consider again, as He is *full of Grace* to us in his own *personal* Temper, and in those *mild* and *gentle* Laws which he hath given us; so *Thirdly*, He is *full of Grace* to us also in respect of that *gracious* Pardon and Forgiveness which he hath procured for, and promised to us if we will heartily repent and amend. I confess, though his *Personal* Temper should be never so *sweet*, and his Laws never so *gentle*, yet if he should, upon every *wilful* Offence, exclude us from all Hope of Pardon, it might justly discourage the Generality of Men from engaging any farther in his Service; because *more* or *less*, we have all sinned, and fallen short of the Glory of God. So that if upon every *wilful* Act of Rebellion, we should stand *for ever* excluded from his Favour, we should generally be left in a *desperate* Condition, and then to what Purpose should we serve him any longer, when by all our *future* Loyalty and Submissions, we must never hope to be re-admitted into his Grace and Favour? To remove this *great* Discouragement therefore, the *blessed Jesus* hath obtained for us this *publick* Grant and Charter of Mercy from his Father, that if now at last we will repent and amend our Ways, notwithstanding all our *past* Rebellions, we shall find Mercy, and be as freely received into his Grace and Favour, as if we never had offended him; and this *merciful* Grant he hath published to us in the Promises of his Gospel: So that now we cannot make the *least* Doubt of our Pardon and Acceptance with him, upon our *unfeigned* Repentance, without calling his Truth and Veracity into Question. And now what *reasonable* Cause of Discouragement have we from returning to the Service of our *blessed Master*, when we are so amply assured that our *past* Disobediences to him shall, upon our Return, be forgotten *for ever*? For, in the Name of *God*, what can we desire more? Is it *reasonable* that the *wise* Governour of the World should pardon Offenders, whether they Repent or no; that he should let them take their Swing in Wickedness, and never take any Cognizance of their Actions? Let us speak plainly; would we have him govern us or no? If not, we are infinitely *besotted*, that for the sake of a *few paltry* Lusts that are our *Plague* and *Shame*, would deprive our selves of all the Blessings and Benefits of his Government. But whatsoever we would have, it is by no means fit that he should surrender up his *just* Authority over us, because we are Fools and Mad-men; and if we think it fit that he should govern us, we cannot be so *senseless* as to think it *reasonable* that he should Pardon our Sins till we repent of them; because by so doing he would give up all, and leave us *absolute* Masters of our selves. So that if we *our selves* had been called to the *Privy Council* of *Heaven*, to give our Vote to those Laws by which we were to be ruled and governed, doubtless we could not have had the Confidence to ask either *gentler* Laws, or *greater* Indulgences than the *blessed Jesus* hath freely granted us in his Gospel. If *God* should have told us, that he would impose nothing on us without *our own* Consent, and bid us ask for our selves any thing that is *fit* and *modest*, doubtless the utmost that any *modest* Man could have craved, would have been only this; *Lord, if thou wilt be but so merciful as to give us such Laws as are suited to our Natures, and are conducive to our Happiness, and so far to consider our Weakness and Instability, as not to cast us away from thy Favour for ever upon every wilful Transgression, but to pardon and receive us again upon our unfeigned Repentance; this is all the Favour we would ask, and for this we would praise and adore thy Goodness for*

ever and ever. Since God therefore out of *his own* Grace and Goodness, hath granted this Indulgence to us, why should we be discouraged from returning to our Duty, tho' we have never so notoriously violated and neglected it? For now we are fully assured that we can never be excluded from all Hope of Pardon, till we are past all Possibility of Repentance.

4. He is *full of Grace* to us also, in respect of that *abundant* Assistance which he hath promised and vouchsafed to us. I do confess, tho' notwithstanding our former Rebellions, if he should be never so ready to receive us into Favour again upon our *unfeigned* Repentance; yet unless he will also assist us in our Repentance, and enable us to conquer the Difficulties of it, we have still very great Reason to be discouraged from his Service: For, by *our own evil* Habits, we have so disabled our selves from returning to our Duty, that without the Concurrence of a *supernatural* Grace, it will be in vain for us to attempt it: For he that from a State of *habitual* Sin, enters into a Course of Repentance, must strive all along against the Current of his Nature, which at first especially, and when he is *weakest*, will be so *swift* and *impetuous*, that by *his own single* Strength, it will be impossible for him to *stem* or conquer it, and unless he be assisted by a *greater* Strength than *his own*, he will be inevitably *born down* and carried away with it, though he struggle never so vigorously against it; so that it is no Encouragement at all to the Service of *Christ*, that he will receive us to Pardon when we heartily repent, unless he will also enable us to repent by the Concurrence of his Grace with our *honest* Endeavours. But this Discouragement also he hath removed out of our Way, by making us a *publick* Grant and Promise of his Grace and Assistance; for he hath assured us that he will give his *holy Spirit* to every one that asks it, Luke 11. 13. that if we will *work out our own Salvation*, he will *work in us to will and to do*, Phil. 1. 12, 13. and that *to him that hath*, that is, improves that Grace which he hath, *it shall be given more abundantly*, Mat. 13. 12. so that though we cannot do all by our own *single* Strength, yet we can do so much as will oblige our *blessed* Master to enable us to do all; and therefore that we do not do all, is as much our Fault as if we could, because we are able to *do all* through *Christ*, who will strengthen us if we will but do what we can; so that this, methinks, should be sufficient to encourage any *reasonable* Man in the World to undertake his Service, to consider that he who is my Master, will *co-operate* with me, and *proportion* my Strength to the Work he enjoins me; that he will not stand *still* with his Arms in his Bosom, and see me struggle in *vain* under an *insupportable* Burthen of Duties, but that he will set *too* his own Shoulders, and contribute his *own* Strength, and enable me, by degrees, to undergo it with Ease and Alacrity; so that though through the *Weakness* and *Impotency* which I have voluntarily contracted, my Duty is become *too heavy* for my Shoulders, yet I will never be disheartned so long as I am sure it is not *too heavy* for my Saviour's; for if I heartily endeavour, I am *confident* I shall undergo it, if it be in the Power of an *Almighty* Grace to enable me.

5. And lastly, He was *full of Grace* to us also, in respect of that *glorious* Recompence which he hath promised to us, and prepared for us. I confess, were his Service all Work, and no Wages, there were some Reason to be disheartned; but when he hath promised, and so amply assured us, that after we have spent a few Days or Years in his Service upon *Earth*, he will receive us into the Participation of *his own* Joys, where we shall commence as *happy* as it is possible for an *everlasting* Heaven to make us, methinks we should kiss his Yoke, and court his Service, and think we can never do too much for such a *bountiful* Master, who rewards all his Servants with such *immortal* Preferments: For what is the Labour of a few Moments, compared with that *everlasting* Rest and Pleasure wherein it shall shortly terminate? And when once we are arrived to the *Heavenly Canaan*, and have tasted those *ravishing* Delights with which it flows and abounds, how *light* and *inconsiderable* will all these Difficulties in our Voyage appear to us, which now do so startle and affright us? How shall we wonder at *our own* Sloth and Faint-heartedness, to think that ever we should be such *wretched* Cowards as to

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be afraid of any thing that hath *Heaven* at the End of it, which is a Happiness so vast and unspeakable, that the Hope of it is sufficient to turn Torments into Recreations; How shall we be astonished at our selves, to think that we could ever be such wretched Fools as to deliberate one Moment, whether *Heaven* were preferable before all the Pleasures of Sin, or whether it were more eligible to dwell with Harlots and Drunkards for a Moment, and wallow in their beastly Pleasures, than to enjoy the Society of God, and Saints, and Angels, to all Eternity? The Odds will then appear so vast, and the Disproportion so unspeakable, that we shall wonder how we could ever be so senseless as to make a Comparison between them. Sure Sirs we do not believe that *Heaven* is the Recompence of Christ's Service; for if we did, methinks we should more heartily engage in it. For could we stand thus deliberating upon the Shore, whether we shall bid adieu to our Lusts, take Leave of all their fulsome Pleasures, and embark our selves in the Service of our Saviour? Could we stand pausing thus as we do, whether we shall venture into those petty Storms that are like to attend us in our spiritual Voyage, did we verily believe that a few Leagues Distance lies that blessed Shore where we shall be crowned as soon as we are landed with all the Joys that an everlasting *Heaven* means? Certainly the Belief of this is sufficient to put Life and Courage into the most crest-fallen Soul in the World, and to give her Spirit and Vigour enough to carry her triumphantly through all the weary Stages of her Duty. So that considering how, in all Respects, our blessed Lord abounds in Grace and Goodness to us, we have the greatest Encouragement imaginable to engage us to his Service.

3dly, *He was full of Truth.*] From whence I infer, That the Christian Religion is a very plain and intelligible Thing. For this, as I have shewed you at large, is one of the great Notes of Distinction between Christ's tabernacling among the Jews and among Christians, that whereas among the Jews, he was full of obscure Types and mystical Representations; among us Christians, he is full of Truth; that is, he is plain, and open, and clear, without any dark Reserves or Mysteries; now he hath plainly revealed that which before he did so obscurely decypher; now he hath unriddled all those mystical Types, and turned them as it were inside outwards, and given us their hidden Sense and Meaning in plain and naked Propositions; and of these our Holy Religion is composed. So that those Doctrines which before were all Mystery, whilst they lay obscurely couched under the Types and Figures of the Law, are now brought forth from behind the Curtain into the open View of the World, and presented barefac'd to our Understandings in the most plain, and easy, and familiar Sense: Not but that Christianity hath some Mysteries in it still, whose Depths we are not able to fathom; but 'tis not because Christ hath not revealed them, but because our Understandings are incapable of comprehending them; such are the Doctrines of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of our Blessed Saviour, and the Hypostatical Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in him: Nor indeed is it much to be wonder'd at, that we, who with all our Wit and Reason, are not able to explicate the Mysteries of a Mite, or Flea, of a Plant or a Stone, or any of those innumerable Things that are before us, should not be able to understand such incomprehensible, to order such infinite, or define such ineffable Things; but though we cannot comprehend the Modes, nor understand the strict Philosophy of them, yet if we would but strip them out of their false Disguises into their original Plainness and Simplicity, we might doubtless easily disentangle them from all Repugnancy and Contradiction, which is sufficient to render them rationally credible, they being contained in that excellent Religion, whose Truth is demonstrated by such abundant Evidence. But perhaps, as God continued all the Doctrines of Christianity in a Mystery among the Jews, and reserved the clear Revelation of them to the coming of the Messiah; so for the same Reason he hath still reserved the clear Discovery of those Doctrines which are still Mysteries to us Christians, for the future State, and then it may be we may as fully understand these, as the believing Jews (after the coming of Christ) did those other Doctrines of the Gospel, which before were all Mysteries

Mysteries to them. But, God be praised, whatsoever is *necessary* to make us *good* and *happy*, is now so plainly discovered to us, that we cannot be *ignorant* of it unless we wilfully shut our own Eyes. We need not dive into *mystical* Senses, or *gripe* after Truth among *Shadows* and *Umbrages*, as the *good Jews* were fain to do under the *Mosaick Dispensation*, all that is *necessary* to our Salvation being written as it were upon the very *Surface* of our *Religion*, and openly exposed to our View in *plain* and *literal* Proposals. And yet notwithstanding the *Plainness* and *Simplicity* of the *Christian Religion*, there are too many, both among *our selves*, and in the *Church of Rome*, who have industriously set themselves to resolve all its Doctrines again into *Darkness* and *unintelligible* Mysteries, having, instead of the *plain* Propositions of our *Saviour*, introduced a *new-fashioned Mystical Divinity*, made up of nothing but certain *empty* Schemes of *effeminate* Follies and *wild* Enthusiasms, which are impossible for any Man to understand that cannot *conjure* for the Meaning of them. And those Doctrines which our *Saviour* purposely delivered in the most *plain* and *literal* Sense, that so the *meanest* Understanding might be instructed by them; these Men have blown up like so many Bubbles into *swelling* Mysteries, which, being stript of those *glittering Allusions*, and *pompous Metaphors*, wherein they are clothed, vanish immediately into Air, or sink into *flat* and *empty* Nonsense. For thus the Doctrine of *Faith*, and *Repentance*, and *Justification*, which lye as *plain* in the *Scripture* as Words can make them, are by their Divinity render'd more *obscure* and *mysterious* than ever they were whilst they were couched under the *Types* and *Figures* of the Law, more of the *true* Nature being discovered in *Circumcision*, and the *legal Washings* and *Atonements*, than in a *hundred* Volumes of *modern Systems of Divinity*. For, whatsoever is *intelligible*, they look upon as *carnal*, and till they have subtilized it into some *unaccountable* Mystery, it is not *spiritual* enough to be admitted into their *System of Divinity*, as if they thought it below the *Majesty* of *Religion* to expose it self to the View of the World, and there was no Way to secure it from Contempt, but to lock it up in Mysteries and Obscurities; for else to what Purpose should they wrap it round with Clouds as they do, unless they design to make a Trade of it, and so draw a Curtain before it, as Men do before their *Puppet-Plays*, that so they may get Money by shewing it: For 'tis *apparent* that *Religion* it self suffers extremely by it; for whilst they thus *spiritualize* it into Air, and do, as it were, *juggle* it out of Sight in the Clouds of their *mystical* Nonsense, they render it extremely *suspicious* to all that are *wise* and *inquisitive*, and will not suffer themselves to be imposed upon by the Trains of their *mysterious Gibberish*. And as for their more *credulous* Followers, whilst they thus lead them by the Nose through a Valley of *Shades* and *Darkness*, they utterly deprive them of the *vigorous* Warmth and Comforts of *Religion*, for how should they know how to make use of the Arguments and Motives of *Christianity*, when those *excellent* Doctrines from whence they are deduced, are wrap'd in *unintelligible* Mysteries? For how should they draw forth from the Articles of their Faith, those *Practical* Principles that are lodged in them, when those Articles are converted into Riddles, which they do not, nor cannot understand? Thus, by turning *Christianity* into a *Mystery*, they do not only thwart the Design of our *Saviour*, which was to bring it forth from under the *mysterious* Representations of the Law, and propose it to the World in the most *plain* and *intelligible* manner; but they also *dispirit* *Religion* it self, whose Life and Energy consists in being understood, and expose it to the Contempt and Scorn of those that have Wit enough to detect the Follies of their *Enthusiastical* Mysteries.

4thly, and Lastly, *He dwelt among us full of Grace and Truth.*] From hence I infer, The Inexcusableness of those Men that persist in their Disobedience to the *Gospel* now that our *Blessed Lord* hath expressed so much Grace towards, and so clearly made known his Mind and Will to us. What Excuse can we urge to palliate our *wretched* Disobedience? If you will but imagine your selves for a *little* while to be standing before the Tribunal of your *Saviour*, where e'er it be long you must all appear, I will briefly draw up what in Probability will be your
Plea,

Plea, and what may be reasonably presumed will be his Answer. ' In the Name of Jesus then let me demand of you, what can you plead for your selves why that fearful Doom which he hath pronounced against you, should not be pass'd upon you? *Why, Lord, we know that thou wert an austere Man, that thou would'st exact of us to the utmost Punctilio, and that if ever we fail'd in the least Circumstance of our Duty thou would'st immediately let loose thy implacable Vengeance upon us, and this utterly disheartned us from thy Service, considering how impossible it was for us to please thee.* ' Ah wretched Creatures! Can you have the Face to charge me with Rigour and Severity, who have had so many notorious Experiments of the Sweetness of my Nature, and Tenderness of my Affections towards you? What one Action was I ever guilty of in all my Conversation among you that could give you the least Suspicion that ever I would prove an austere Master to you, or that I would not be ready to construe you in the most favourable Sense, and to pity and pardon you wheresoever you were excusable? Did I ever give you any Occasion to think that I was of a peevish or captious Nature, apt to be provoked with Trifles? Yea, had you not all the Reason in the World to conclude from the Sweetness of my Temper that I would be always ready to consider your Infirmities, and pity your Weaknesses, and judge you by the Measures of a Friend? And do you now pretend that it was the Dread of my Severity that disheartned you from my Service? But, Lord, the Laws which thou gavest us were so intolerably burthensom that neither we nor our Fore-fathers were able to bear them: We would willingly have obeyed thee if it had been possible, but when we saw thy Burthen exceeded our Strength, we concluded it was in vain for us to attempt the bearing it. ' O ungrateful Rebels! Dare ye accuse me of Tyranny when you know in your own Consciences I never impos'd any Law upon you but what had a necessary Tendency to your Happiness, and was so far in its own Nature from being a Burthen to you, that it commanded nothing but what would have been an Ease and Refreshment? And if you can produce any one of my Commands that oblig'd you to any thing but to be kind to your selves, or convince me that I could have enjoyned less upon you without being less kind or merciful to you, I will freely admit of your Plea as just, and immediately pardon all your Disobediences against me. But when all my Laws are Instances of my Love to you, and Expressions of my Zeal for your Welfare, who but such Monsters of Ingratitude as your selves would ever have charged me with Tyranny and Oppression? But, Lord, thou knowest we are fickle and mutable Creatures; and though we did heartily resolve that we would never revolt from thy Service, yet through the many Temptations that perpetually sollicit'd us, we were at last seduced into a Rebellion against thee: And though when we reflected upon what we had done, we were full of Sorrow and Remorse, and wish'd from our Souls that we had never done it; yet then, being desperate of Mercy, and past all Hopes of Pardon, we concluded that it was too late to repent, or to think of returning to our Duty again. ' Ah unworthy Wretches! With what Confidence can you impute the Continuation of your Rebellion against me to your Despair of ever finding Mercy at my Hands, when you know in your own Consciences that I died to procure Forgiveness for you, and that by my Death I obtained an Act of Indemnity and Oblivion for all that would come in, and return to their Duty, upon the Proclamation of my Gospel? When you cannot but know that I tender'd you your Pardon sealed with my own Blood, and courted you to accept of it; and though time after time you scornfully refused and rejected it, yet in hope that at last you might be prevail'd with, you know how long I waited upon you even till you had tired out my Patience, and I saw there was no Remedy? And do you now charge your not returning to your Duty upon your Hopelessness of Pardon for your former Rebellions? 'Tis true, Lord, we cannot deny but thou didst offer us Pardon; but, alas! It was upon an impossible Condition, even upon a hearty Repentance, and a thorough Reformation, which thou knewest we were not then able to perform. For by a long Custom of Rebellion against thee, we had contracted so many inveterate evil Habits, which had so weaken'd and de-

bilitated

hilitated our Powers, that we were no more able to reform and amend our selves than the Leopard is to change his Spots, or the Ethiopian his Skin: To what Purpose then should we attempt Impossibilities, or set our selves to wrestle with Difficulties which we knew we were never able to surmount? ' But pray, how did you know that it was impossible for you to repent when by all the Arguments I used with you, I could never persuade you to make Trial of it? You know in your own Consciences that there are many things that you could do; you could have betaken your selves to a serious Consideration of the Duties and Motives of Religion; you could have attended, and abstained at least from the outward Acts of Sin, and humbly implored my Grace and Assistance; and that to encourage you to do this, and what else was in your Power, I gave you the most ample Assurance in the World that I would back and enforce your Endeavours with the Aids of my Grace, and in despite of all opposition crown them with Success. So that though by your own single Strength indeed you could never have effected your Repentance, yet it was far from being impossible to you, since you knew that by doing what was in your Power, you should infallibly oblige me to enable you to do all the rest? But, Blessed Lord, What Encouragement had we to repent and return to our Duty? For if we had done it, we must have bid adieu for ever to all those Pleasures and Delights by which we were invited and detained in the Service of our Lusts; and Thou offered'st us nothing in exchange for them, but only Sighs and Tears, with other ungrateful Rigours of a bitter and severe Repentance. How then canst thou blame our Disobedience against thee, when we had so many inviting Temptations to it, and so little Encouragement to the contrary? ' O prodigious Impudence! With what Face can you assert such a notorious Falshood, when you know in your own Consciences that besides all those Pleasures that are natural to my Service, and which do vastly exceed all the Pleasures of Sin, I laid an immortal Crown at your Feet, and faithfully promised you that if you would but spend a short Life in my Service, I would at the End of it receive you into that blissful State where you should be happy beyond all your Wishes, and to the utmost Capacity of your Nature; where you should live with God and Angels in the most rapturous Exercise of everlasting Love and Joy, which one would have thought had been sufficient to recompence you for those silly Pleasures for whose sake you deserted me and my Service. But since you have trampled upon all my Offers, and would by no means be persuaded by all those mighty Tenders I have made you, Go ye deservedly curst into ever—Hold, Lord, we beseech thee, and before thou passest thy irrevocable Doom upon us, hear this last Petition we shall make for our selves: We now confess that we are fully convinc'd (and O that we had understood it sooner!) what infinite Reason we had to adhere to thee and thy Service. It is our Misery that these things were not sooner discover'd to us, or at least that they were not so clearly discovered as to convince and persuade us. Had we but known what we now know, we would never have deserted thee as we did; and therefore we beseech thee have Pity upon our Ignorance, and impute not to our Wills the Faults of our Understandings, which are not in our Power to remedy? ' Why, is this the utmost that you can plead for your selves? Have I not told you all these things before-hand as plainly as Words could express them? Have I not instituted an Order of Men in my Church to explain these things to you, and to put you in mind of them? So that whatever you pretend, you could not but know and understand them; or if you did not, it was because you would not. And if you would wilfully shut your Eyes against the Light, it was your own Fault that you did not see, and you may thank your selves for the Consequents of it. I plainly told you where your Wickedness would end, and unless you were wilfully blind you could not but see what the Event of your Sin would prove, even while you were committing it; and you know in your own Consciences that this fearful Doom, which now you deprecate, you were fairly warned of when you might have easily avoided it by a timely Submission, but you would not. And seeing you would be so mad as to reject Heaven when it lay before you, and leap into Hell with your Eyes

‘ Eyes open, your Blood be upon *your own* Heads. For I have tried all the Arts of Love, and Methods of Kindness to reclaim you ; and since you have rendered them all *ineffectual*, what remains but that you depart from me, like accursed Wretches as you are, into that *everlasting* Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

And now, I beseech you, do not *your own* Consciences consent to the Justice and Righteousness of this Procedure ? Is there any *tolerable* Plea you can urge at the Judgment-Seat of *Jesus Christ* which here hath not been fully answered ? And if so, how *inexcusable* shall we be when we come to plead *our own* Cause in the *great* Assembly of Spirits ? For when these Aggravations of our Disobedience shall be laid open, our Guilt will appear so *foul* and *monstrous* that we shall doubtless be Condemned by the *unanimous* Vote of all the *Reasonable* World ; and as soon as the *great* Judge hath pass’d his Sentence upon us, *our own* Consciences will be forc’d to echo, *Just and Righteous art thou, O Lord, in all thy Ways.* Wherefore as we would not be found *inexcusably guilty* when we come to plead for our Lives before the Tribunal of our *Saviour*, let us all be persuaded to return to his Service, and faithfully to continue in it, that so instead of *Go ye cursed*, we may hear from his Mouth that *welcome* Approbation, *Well done good and profitable Servants, enter into the Joy of your Master.*

III. I come now to the *last* Proposition in the Text, *viz. And we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only Son of the Father.* In handling of which I shall do these two Things :

1. Explain to you what the Glory of this *Word* was which the *Apostle* tells us they beheld.

2. Shew you that it was *the Glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father.*

1. What was the Glory of the *Word*, which the *Apostle* tells us they beheld ? I answer in general, By this *Glory* here must be understood something that is *resembling* to the Glory of his dwelling in the Tabernacle ; because, as I have already shewed you, the *Apostle* seems plainly to refer it, in that he doth not only tell us that the *Word* tabernacled among us, which alludes to his Tabernacling among the *Jews*, but he also tells us, that they saw his Glory ; which alludes to that Glory of the Lord which the *Jews* beheld in that *ancient* Tabernacle. Since therefore the *Apostle* mentions this Glory of the *Word Incarnate*, by way of Allusion to the Glory of his *Divine Presence* in the Tabernacle, it must necessarily bear some Resemblance or Proportion to it ; because else it would be no *proper* Allusion. The best Way therefore for us to discover what this Glory of *Christ* was which they beheld, is to consider wherein the Glory of the *Divine Presence* in the Tabernacle did chiefly discover it self ; and that, you shall find, was in these four Things : *First*, In a *bright* and *luminous* Appearance. *Secondly*, In exerting of an *extraordinary* Power. *Thirdly*, In giving Laws and Oracles. *Fourthly*, In *sensible* Significations of its own *immaculate* Sanctity and Purity. And in Proportion and Correspondence to these, the Glory of the *Word Incarnate* also must consist in these four Things :

1st, In the *visible* Splendor and Brightness with which his Person was arrayed at his *Baptism*, and more especially at his *Transfiguration*.

2^{dly}, In those *great* and *stupendious* Miracles that he wrought in the Course of his Ministry.

3^{dly}, In the *incomparable* Purity and Goodness of his Life.

4^{thly}, In the *surpassing* Excellency, and Divinity of his Doctrine.

1st, That Glory of the *Word* which St. *John* and the *Apostles* beheld, consisted in that *visible* Splendor and Brightness with which his Person was arrayed at his *Baptism*, and more especially at his *Transfiguration* ; in Resemblance to that *vi-*

visible Splendor and Brightness in which he appeared in the *Mosaick Tabernacle*, where it is frequently said that the Glory of the Lord abode and appeared; as you may see, *Exod.* 24. 16. and 40. 34. Which Glory 'tis evident discovered its self in an *extraordinary visible* Splendor that shone from between the *Cherubims*, and diffused it self thence all over that *sacred Habitation*. And accordingly in *Ezek.* 43. 2. it is said, that *the Glory of the God of Israel came from the Way of the East, and the Earth shone with his Glory*; which denotes that it was *extraordinary bright and luminous*, since the Earth shone with the very Reflection of it. And in this same *glorious* Splendor was *Christ* arrayed, first at his *Baptism*, and afterwards at his *Transfiguration*. For at his *Baptism* it is said, that *the Heavens were opened unto him, and that he saw the Spirit of God descending like a Dove, and lighting upon him*, *Matth.* 3. 16. Where by the *Holy Ghost's* descending like a Dove, it is not necessary we should understand his descending in the Shape or Form of a Dove, but that in some *glorious* Form or Appearance he descended in the same manner as a Dove descends; and therefore *St. Luke* expresses it thus, *And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily Shape like a Dove upon him*, *Luke* 3. 22. that is, he descended in some very *glorious* and *visible* Appearance, in the same Manner as Doves are wont to descend when they come down from the Skies, and pitch upon the Earth. But what that Shape was in which he appeared, is not here expressed; but that which seems to be most *probable* is this, that the *Holy Ghost* assuming a Body of Light, or surrounded as it were with a Guard of Angels appearing in *luminous* Forms, came down from *above* just as a Dove with his Wings spread forth is observed to do, and lighted upon our Saviour's Head; and the Reason why I think so, is this, both because where-ever any mention is made of God's, or the *Holy Ghost's* appearing in an *indefinite* Form, it is always in a Body of Light and *visible* Splendor, of which I have given you sundry Instances; and also because it seems to have been a very *early* Tradition in the Church, that it was in a very *glorious* Appearance of Light that the *Holy Ghost* came down upon our Saviour: And therefore in the *Gospel of the Nazarens*, as *Grotius* observes, it's said that upon the *Holy Ghost's* Descent, *ἐνθαυτε περίλαμψε τὸν τόπον ὅς ἐστι μίση*, immediately a great Light shone round about the Place; and *Justin Martyr*, speaking of our Saviour's Baptism, saith expressly, *πῦρ αἶψα ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ*, that there was a Fire lighted in the River Jordan; that is, the Water, immediately after he was baptized in it, seemed to be all on Fire by the Reflection of that *bright* and *flaming* Appearance in which the *Holy Ghost* descended upon him; so that while he wore this Crown of *visible* Light, his Head, as the Painters are wont to express it, was circled round with the Rays of that Glory in which he was wont to appear from between the *Cherubims*. And this Glory of his was unquestionably seen by many of the *Apostles*, who were sundry of them Disciples to *John the Baptist*, and so may reasonably be supposed to be present at the Baptism of our Saviour.

And as for his *Transfiguration* upon Mount *Tabor*, it is said, that upon it his Face did shine as the Sun, and that his Raiment was white as the Light; or as *St. Luke* expresses it, *ὁ ἱματισμὸς αὐτοῦ λευκοῦς ὡς ἐλαστίνων*; that is, his Raiment was like the Whiteness of a Flash of Lightning, *Luke* 9. 29. So that from Head to Foot he was all inrobed in a *visible* Glory, and covered with all that Brightness, and *dazzling* Splendor in which he was wont to appear in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. And accordingly you have mention made of a Cloud that over-shadowed the three Disciples, whilst *Jesus* remained in his *Transfiguration*, which is exactly agreeable with that Cloud that covered the Tabernacle of *Moses*, whilst the Glory of the Lord filled it, as you may see, *Exod.* 40. 34. And that this *glorious* Transfiguration was a Part of that Glory of the Word which *St. John* here says they beheld, is evident, because himself was one of the three Disciples that were Eye-Witnesses of this *glorious* Scene, and it is expressly said of him and his Brethren, that they saw his Glory, and the two Men that stood with him, *Luke* 9. 32.

2dly, This Glory which they saw consisted in those *great and stupendious* Miracles that he wrought in the Course of his Ministry, in Proportion to that *extraordinary* Power in which the Glory of the *Divine Presence* discovered it self in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. For thus we find that it was from the Tabernacle that God exerted all that *miraculous* Power by which he punished the Rebellions of the *Jews*, and wrought those *miraculous* Deliverances for them. 'Twas from the Tabernacle that he commanded the Earth to open, and swallow up *Corab, Dathan, and Abiram*, and that he sent forth that *devouring* Fire which consumed their *Two hundred and fifty* Accomplices. 'Twas from the Tabernacle that he smote the *false* Spies with the Plague, and sent forth an Army of *fiery* Serpents to destroy the *murmuring* Israelites. 'Twas by his Presence in the Tabernacle that he conducted them through the Wilderness, and drove their Enemies before them; that he divided the River *Jordan* to open them a Passage into *Canaan*, and made the Wall of *Jericho* to fall flat at the Blasts of a few *Rams-horns*. And upon the Account of this *Miraculous* Power which he exerted from the Tabernacle, the Ark that was contained in it, and was the *special* Seat of his Presence, is called the *Ark of his strength*, *Psal. 132. 8.* and God is said to *send them help from his Sanctuary, and to strengthen them out of Sion*, where the Ark was reposit in the Sanctuary of the Temple, *Psal. 20. 2.* Thus also those Words are to be understood, *Psal. 80. 2. Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength, and come and help us*; because the Ark, from whence God was wont to put forth his Strength in saving of that People, marched immediately before these *three Tribes*. And this was very well understood both by the *Israelites* and the *Philistines*; for when the *Philistines* had overthrown them, they desired that the Ark of the Lord might be fetched out of *Shiloh*, that so when it came among them it might save them out of the Hands of their Enemies, *1 Sam. 4. 3.* And when the *Philistines* understood that the Ark was brought into their Camp, they were sore afraid, and cryed out, *God is come into the Camp: Wo unto us; who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the Plagues in the Wilderness, ver. 7, 8.* From whence it is evident that they both look'd upon the Tabernacle as the Seat of God's *miraculous* Power, and this *miraculous* Power is called the Glory of God; for thus when the Ark was taken by the *Philistines*, it is said that God *delivered his Strength into Captivity, and his Glory into the Enemies hand*, *Psal. 78. 61.* and his Glory, and the Miracles that he wrought from the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, are mentioned as *Synonymous* Terms, *Numb. 14. 22. Because all these Men have seen my Glory, and my Miracles which I did in Egypt, and in the Wilderness, &c.* So that it's evident, that he exerted his *miraculous* Power from the Tabernacle, and that this *miraculous* Power was his Glory.

And consonantly hereunto it was from the Tabernacle of *Humane* Nature wherein he dwelt, that the *Eternal Word* exerted that *miraculous* Power whereby he cured the *Sick*, calmed the Sea, and raised the Dead, vanquished the Devils, and wrought all his *miraculous* Works, which were so many and so great that they ravished his Friends with Joy to behold them, and struck Terror and Amazement into his Enemies; for so it is said, that *they were all amazed at the mighty Power of God* that was in him, *Luke 9. 43.* And that when they saw how the Devils trembled, and fled before him, *they marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel, Matth. 9. 33.* So that by their own Confession, that *miraculous* Power which he exerted in the Tabernacle of *Humane* Nature did far exceed that *miraculous* Power which he exercised in the Tabernacle of *Moses*. And this *miraculous* Power of his is also expressly called his Glory, *John 2. 11. This beginning of Miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his Glory, and his Disciples believed on him.* So that as his *miraculous* Power was called his Glory when he tabernacled among the *Jews*, so it was also when he tabernacled in *Humane* Nature, and so by consequence this also was a Part of that Glory of his which his *Apostles* saw while he dwelt among them.

3dly, This Glory which they saw consisted also in the *surpassing* Excellency and Divinity of his Doctrine, agreeably to that Expression of his *glorious* Presence in the *Old Tabernacle*, viz. his giving Laws and Oracles to the *Israelites*. For thus we find that God told *Moses*, that he would *meet him in the Tabernacle, and commune with him of all things, which he would give him in Commandment to the Children of Israel*, *Exod. 25. 22.* And, *Numb. 7. 89.* you have the manner of his Communing with them described; for *when Moses, saith he, went into the Tabernacle, he heard the Voice of one speaking unto him from off the Mercy-Seat that was upon the Ark, from between the two Cherubims.* For Christ, as I have formerly shewed you, being the *civil Prince or Sovereign of the Jews*, the *Cherubims* were the Throne upon which he sat, and from whence he gave Laws and Directions for the Administration of the Affairs of his Kingdom: And accordingly he is said to *dwell between the Cherubims*, *Psal. 99. 1* and to *ride upon the Cherubims*, *2 Sam. 22. 11.* and the Sanctuary wherein the *Cherubims* were seated, is expressly called *the Throne of the Lord*, *Jerem. 17. 12.* because here it was that he sat in all his Majesty, and gave forth his Laws and Ordinances to the Kingdom of *Israel*. And this was an *eminent* Expression of the Glory of his Presence among them, because hereby he asserted his Sovereign Authority, and did publicly challenge to himself that Right to his *glorious* Power which from all *Eternity* was *inherent* in him. And hence the *Apostle* calls the giving those Divine Laws and Oracles a *glorious Ministration*, and plainly asserts it to be an Instance of the Glory of the *Divine Shechinah*, or Presence in the Tabernacle, when he grants that *the Ministration of Death written and engraven in stone, was glorious*, yea and that Ministration to be Glory in the Abstract, *2 Cor. 3. 7, 9.*

And in Correspondence hereunto did the *Divine Word*, when he tabernacled in our Natures, give forth *Divine* Laws and Oracles to the World; all which are yet remaining among us, and do contain in them the Substance of our *Holy Religion*; which being so *divine* and *godlike*, and altogether composed of the *purest* Laws, and most *Heavenly* Doctrines, is a most *proper* Instance of that Glory of the *Eternal Word* which the Apostles beheld, tho' not with the Eyes of their Bodies, yet with those of their Minds. For what can be more *glorious* in the Eye of Reason than those *illustrious* Discoveries which he hath made to us in his Gospel of the *Nature of God*, and the *Duty of Man*, and the *immortal* Recompences of the World to come, in which he hath so far exceeded whatsoever *Humane* Wisdom was able to discover of them, that all the *Philosophy* that ever was *before* him must confess it self eclipsed and out-shone by him, and all the *Philosophy* that ever *succeeded* him, hath been forced to derive and borrow Light from him: And accordingly we find his Gospel, in which his Doctrines are contained, stiled by the Name of *the glorious Gospel*, *2 Cor. 4. 4.* which in Comparison with those *dark* and *confused* Discoveries which the World had formerly made, the *Apostle* resembles to the first breaking forth of the Light out of the *rude* and *obscure* Chaos, *2 Cor. 4. 6.* For God, saith he, *who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined into our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ*; where, by the *Face of Jesus Christ*, the *Apostle* seems plainly to allude to that *Divine* Glory and Luster with which *Moses's* Face shone when he came down from seeing the Glory of God, *Exod. 33. 29.* So that his Meaning is this, that as the *Children of Israel* with their *bodily* Eyes saw the Glory of God shining upon the Face of *Moses*, so *they*, the *Disciples* and *Apostles* of our Saviour, had far more clearly beheld with the Eyes of their Minds the *Divine* Glory displayed in his Doctrine and Ministry.

4thly, And lastly, This Glory of the *Eternal Word* which they saw, consisted also in the *incomparable* Sanctity and Purity of his Life, semblably to that Expression of his *glorious* Presence in the *Old Tabernacle*, viz. the *sensible* Significations he gave of the *immaculate* Purity and Holiness of his Nature. For by those *outward* Cleansings of all Things and Persons that did any ways belong to the Tabernacle, or did at any time approach it, he did openly represent and signify the Purity and Sanctity of his *own* Nature, which being infinitely separated from all

all manner of *Impurity* and *Uncleanness*, cannot endure that any thing that is *filthy* or *impure* should approach it. For thus we read that the Tabernacle it self, and all the *Utenfils* of it, were to be *purified* and *sanctified* with Oil before the Entrance of the *Shechinah*, or *Divine Presence*: So also the *High Priest*, the *Priests*, and the *People* were to be cleansed and purified before they were suffered to approach the *Holy Habitation*; and if at any time they had contracted any of those *legal Uncleannesses* that are specified in the Law of *Moses*, they were to be excluded from the Communion of the Congregation, and from all the Exercises of *Publick Worship* and Devotion, till they were cleansed and purified again: The Intent of all which was to signify to that People how *irreconcilable* his Nature was to all Impurity and Wickedness, that it could not admit of the Neighbourhood of any Evil, nor dwell within any Lines of Communication with it; for this is expressed in the very Reason why these *Legal Purifications* are so strictly required: *For I the Lord your God, am holy*, Levit. 19. 2. *For I the Lord which sanctify you, am holy*, Levit. 21. 8. Plainly intimating that the Intent and Reason of all those *Ceremonial Purifications*, was to signify to that *dull* and *stupid* People the *immaculate Holiness* and Purity of his own Nature, which is so infinitely removed from any thing that is *impure* and *unholy*, that he could neither communicate with, nor endure the Approaches of it. And in this 'tis evident he placed a great Part of the Glory of his *Majestical Presence* in the Tabernacle, since a great Part of that *Religion* which he there instituted was intended to signify the Glory of his Holiness to them; and accordingly he is described to be *glorious in Holiness*, Exod. 15. 11.

And agreeably hereunto did the *Eternal Word*, when he tabernacled in our Natures, signify to the World the *unspotted Purity* of his Nature by that *incomparable* Example of Holiness which he gave in his Life and Conversation among us. For whereas before he express'd his Holiness by *Mystical Types* and *Ceremonial Observances*, he hath now signified it by a Life full of Virtue and Goodness, and a Conversation exactly conformable to the *eternal Rules* of Righteousness. For, as a Creature, in respect of his *Humanity*, he never failed in the *least Punctilio* of that *Duty*, *Homage*, and *Devotion* which he owed to the most *High God* his Creator; as a Man, he never swerved either in his Passions or Appetites from the *strictest Rules* of *Sobriety* and *Temperance*; as a Member of *Humane Society*, he never was guilty of an *unrighteous Action* either towards his *Superiors*, *Inferiors*, or *Equals*; but all his Life was a *walking Monument* of Goodness, and his whole Conversation a most *perfect Transcript* of those *Divine* and *Heavenly Laws* which he gave to the World. So that he was all *glorious without* as well as *within*, his Practice being a *living Comment* and Paraphrase upon that *immaculate Purity* and Holiness which is the Glory of his *Divine Nature*. This therefore was doubtless a Part of that Glory which the Apostles beheld in the *Eternal Word*, even that *immaculate Sanctity* and Holiness of which he gave so many *glorious Significations* in the whole Course of his Conversation: And accordingly we find this his Purity and Holiness described by the Name of the *Glory of the Lord*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. *But we all with open face, beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*: Where it's plain that by the *Glory of the Lord*, must be meant his Holiness; because it is into the Image of *that* that we are transformed. So that the meaning of the Words is this, we all beholding the Holiness of *Christ*, which is his Glory, in the *Glass* of his Doctrine and *incomparable Example*, are transformed into the Likeness of it; and do gradually pass on from *one Degree* of this Glory of his Holiness to *another*, under the Conduct and Assistance of the *Spirit of Christ*.

And so I have done with the *first* thing proposed, which was to shew you what that Glory of *Christ* was which the *Apostle* here tells us they beheld.

2. I now proceed to the *second Branch* of my Discourse, which was to shew you that this was the Glory as of the *only begotten Son of the Father*: But before
we

we proceed to the Proof of it, it will be *necessary* to explain this Phrase, *ὡς ὡς ὁ υἱογενής*, the *Glory as of the only begotten Son*. Which Word, *ὡς*, or *as*, is in *Scripture* taken two Ways, sometimes as a Note of *Similitude* or *Comparison*; so *Mat. 6. 10. Thy Will be done in Earth, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ*, as it is in *Heaven*; that is, like as it is in *Heaven*; and if we take it in this Sense, then the Meaning of the Words must be this, *And we beheld his Glory which was like unto the Glory of the only begotten Son of the Father*; that is, like unto that Glory in which the only begotten Son was wont to appear when he dwelt in the Tabernacle, and conversed with the *antient Patriarchs*. And in this Sense I have shewed you already how it was *as* the Glory of the *only begotten Son*, by shewing you the *great Agreement* and *Similitude* there was between the Glory of *Christ* when he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moses*, and in the Tabernacle of *our Nature*. And when I consider how plainly this Text doth allude to the *Shechinah* or *Divine Presence* of the *Word* in that *ancient Tabernacle*, I am very much induced to think that we ought not to exclude this Sense of it, namely, that as he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *our Nature*, like as he dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moses*; so that Glory of his which they beheld in the Tabernacle of *our Nature*, was like unto that Glory in which he appeared in the *ancient Tabernacle*.

But then this Word *ὡς*, is sometimes also taken for a Note of *Confirmation*. So *Psal. 73. 1. ὡς ἀγαθὸς ὁ Θεός*, Truly *God is good to Israel*. And thus *St. Chrysostome* understands it here *ὡς ἐν ἀποδείξει ἐστὶν ὁ Θεὸς ἀγαθὸς, ἀλλὰ βεβαιώτως*, &c. *It is not a Note of Similitude and Comparison, but of Confirmation and unquestionable Distinction*; as if the *Evangelist* had said, we saw his Glory, such as *became* and was *fit* for the *only begotten* and truly *natural Son of God*. For my Part, I see no Reason why the Words may not be fairly understood in *both* Senses, since they are no Ways *opposite* to, nor *inconsistent* with one another; and if so, then this must be the Meaning of the Words; *We beheld his Glory which was like unto that Glory in which the only begotten Son appeared in the old Tabernacle, and which was such as was every Way becoming the only begotten Son to appear in*. The first of which Senses I have proved to you already, that the Glory of *Christ* in the Tabernacle of *our Natures* was like unto his Glory in the Tabernacle of *Moses*; and therefore now I shall only prove the *second*, that it was such as *became* and was every Way *worthy* of the *only begotten Son of the Father*; and this I doubt not will plainly appear by considering the *several Particulars* of it.

1st, That *visible Splendor* and *Brightness* in which he appeared at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, was such as *became* him, and was *worthy* of him. For in all Probability, that *Splendor* consisted of *Angelical Beings*, clothed in *bright* and *luminous Bodies*; because, as I have formerly proved to you, that *Brightness* in which he appeared upon the *Mount*, and which he displayed from between the *Cherubims*, was nothing else but those *Angels of Light*, or *ministering Spirits* which he made to appear as *Flames of Fire* round about him; and therefore that *Train of Angels* whom *Ezay* saw filling the Temple, *Ezay 6. 1. our Saviour* calls the *Glory of the Lord*, *John 12. 41. that is, that visible Glory* in which the Lord appear'd from between the *Cherubims*. And if that *visible Glory* consisted in a *Train of Angels* appearing in *glorious Forms*, then there is no doubt but that *visible Glory* of our *Saviour* at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration* was the same; since, as I have already shewed you, it is described by the *same Name*, and in the *same Manner of Appearance*; and if so, how well did it become the *only begotten Son* to be surrounded with the *illustrious Guards* of his Father's Court, and attended on with those *high born Spirits*, whose Office it is to minister before the Throne of the most *High*? For never was the most *glorious Potentate* upon Earth, attended with such a *splendid Train* and *Retinue*, the *meanest* of which was far more *illustrious* than the *greatest* and most *high-born Monarch* in the World. So that as the most *High God* did, by a Voice from *Heaven*, both at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, declare him to be his *beloved Son*; so by the *glorious Train* of *Attendants* he sent him, he manifested the Truth of his Declaration; for we must needs suppose him to be the Son of the most *High*, when we see the most *glori-*

ous Beings in all the Creation, so willingly submit themselves to his Service and Attendance: And when we see the most *Highb* adorning his *Outside* with the *luminous* Bodies of Angels, we may reasonably conclude that there was a *Divinity within*, and that the *Jewel* was *God*, because the *Casket* was *Angels*. But whatsoever this *glorious* Splendor was in which he was *clothed* at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, it was apparently such as very well *became* the *only begotten Son*, not only because, as the *Philosopher* saith, that if *God* would ever take upon him a Body, it would be certainly *Light*, which is a Vesture most *suitable* to his *Glory* and *Majesty*; but also because that *miraculous* Splendor was an *infallible* Token of the Presence of the *Divinity* in him; for it never was but where *God* was present; and therefore it is called the *Glory of God*, it being the *inseparable* Concomitant of his more *peculiar* Residence. For thus, as I have shewed you upon the *Mount* and in the *Tabernacle*, it was a *visible* Demonstration of the *special* Presence of the *invisible* *God*, and wheresoever in all the *Old Testament*, any Mention is made of its Appearance, you shall find that there *God* himself did peculiarly reside: And therefore it is not to be imagined that *God* would have communicated to our *Saviour*, this *inseparable* Token of his *own* Presence, unless the *Divinity* had resided in him. For *Jesus Christ* was the only Person upon whom this *visible* *Glory* descended; never did the *Hand of Heaven* put forth such a *Robe* and *Diadem* of *Glory* upon any Person in the *World*, as this which our *Saviour* wore at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, which plainly denotes that he was the only Person in whom the *Divinity* was *substantially* united, and did *essentially* dwell. So that as this *visible* *Glory* was a *certain* Token of *God's peculiar* Residence in the *Tabernacle* and *Temple*, so it was also of his *special* Presence in *Christ*; for the *History* of his *Baptism* tells us, that it did not only make a *transient* Appearance, but that it remained on him, signifying that the *Divinity*, whose Presence was denoted by it, had made him his *Habitation* and *Place of constant* Abode. For though that *visible* *Glory* after some *Time* disappeared and went off from him, yet the Thing signified by it, *viz.* the *Divine* Presence, always remained in him; for by that *outward* *Glory* he was clearly manifested to be the *Holy One of God*, the *Tabernacle* and *Sanctuary* in which *God* was, and where he had taken up his *Residence for ever*, that his *Humane* Nature was that *sacred* Temple where the *Divinity* intended to dwell, and from whence for the *future* he would deliver all his *Oracles*, and communicate all his *Blessings* to *Mankind*. So that in this respect this *visible* *Glory* was such as highly *became* the *only begotten Son*; because it plainly denoted that the *Fulness* of the *God head* dwelt *bodily* in him, and had chosen him for his *Habitation* for ever; and therefore *John Baptist* tells us, that though he knew him not, yet this *God* had revealed to him, *Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.* And I saw and bear Record that it was the *Son of God*, *John* i. 33, 34. where you may observe, that though it was revealed to him only that he was the Person that should baptize with the *Holy Ghost*, upon whom the *Spirit* descended, yet he bare Record also that this Person was the *Son of God*, rationally concluding that this *visible* *Glory*, which was such an *infallible* Token of the *special* Presence of the *Divinity*, was never to be communicated to any but the *Son of God*. And it is very observable, that at both these *Times*, when our *Saviour* was arrayed in this *glorious* Splendor, he is declared by a *Voice from Heaven* to be the *Son of God*, it being the *Father's* Intention at once to manifest him to be his *Son* both by *Word* and *Deed*; and at the same time, when he declared him to be his *Son*, to array him in such a *Glory* as *became* the *Dignity* of his Person.

2dly, The great and *stupendous* Miracles that he wrought were such as *became* his *only begotten Son*. 'Tis true, it cannot be denied but several Miracles have been wrought by *meer* Men, they being authorized by *God*, and assisted by his *Almighty* Power; but so many and so great as our *Saviour* wrought were never performed by any *Mortal*. For as to the *Number* of them, they were more than ever were wrought by *Moses* and all the *Prophets* together; for, besides those

those that are recorded, which were all performed within the Space of *four* Years at most, St *John* tells us, that he wrought so many that the World could not contain the Records of them, *John* 21. 25. which though it be an *Hyperbolic* Expression, yet denotes thus much at least, that the Number of them was so great that they were almost *innumerable*. And as to the Greatness of them, they did apparently exceed all that ever were wrought before in the World. For he did not only raise the Dead, but he raised *himself* also after he had been *barbarously* murdered by his Enemies. He made the *Winds* and *Sea* obey him, and with the Word of his Mouth vanquished the *Devils*, and drove them from their Habitations, and forc'd them against their Wills, and their Interest to acknowledge him to be the Son of God. And whereas the Miracles of *Moses* and the *Prophets* were most of them *noxious*, they being Acts of *Divine* Vengeance upon the *Wicked* and *Ungodly*, and consequently more apt to terrify than to oblige those that beheld them; the Miracles of our *Saviour* were all of them Expressions of his *unfeigned* Love and Good-Will to the World. For among all that *vast* Number of *wondrous* Works that he wrought, there is not *one* to be found by which any Man was ever prejudiced, unless it was his dismissing the Devils into the Swine of the *Gadarens*, which without all doubt he did in Kindness and Goodwill to the Owners; who being so *cruel* to themselves as to prefer their Swine before their *Saviour*, it was great Charity and Mercy to deprive them of that which was so *apparent* a Hindrance to their Enjoyment of a far greater Good. So that all his *wondrous* Works were nothing but Acts of Kindness and Beneficence; for he went about doing Good, *curing* all that were *possessed* with the Devil, and *healing* all manner of Diseases. And whereas none of those that wrought Miracles before him could ever pretend to perform them by any *immanent* Power of their own, but had only a *transient* Power given them for the *present* Miracle, which they either obtained from *God* upon their Prayers and Supplications, or was given by *God* for the Execution of his *own* Will and Command; the *bles-sed* *Jesus* had this Power subjected and abiding in him, so that he could exert it *when*, and *where*, and as *often* as he pleased; and whether he were *absent* or *present*, with the Word of his Mouth he could do what he would; yea, and many times he performed his *wondrous* Works without any Word or Sign intervening, even by a *silent* Virtue proceeding from that *miraculous* Power with which he was endued; and of all his Miracles there is only *one* which he performed upon Prayer and Supplication to his Father, and that was his raising *Lazarus* from the Dead, the Reason of which he himself gives, *John* 11. 42. *Because of the People which stand by, that they may believe that thou hast sent me*: Intimating that he did not offer up this Prayer to his Father with design to obtain of him a *new* Power of working Miracles, which he was already endued with in an *abundant* measure; but that hereby I might signify to the People how *acceptable* I am to thee, and let them see that I do all my Works in thy Name. And that he had this Power, is evident in that he did so plentifully communicate it to his *Apostles* and Followers, which neither *Moses* or the *Prophets* were ever able to do. For thus, *Luke* 10. 19. he expressly tells his *Seventy* Disciples, *Behold, I give you power to tread on Serpents and Scorpions*; and so also when he dismissed his *Twelve* Apostles into *Judea*, *Matth.* 10. 8. he bids them, *Go, heal the Sick, cleanse the Lepers, raise the Dead, cast out Devils*; for *freely ye have received*, saith he, and therefore *freely give*. From all which it is apparent how far the *miraculous* Works of our *Saviour* did exceed all those that ever were done before him; and being so great and excellent, so far *transcending* all that ever was done by any Mortal, they plainly demonstrated him to be the *Son of God*, and very well became the Dignity of his Person. For how could he have done all these *mighty* Things by a Power *immanent* in himself, had he not been the *Son* of an *Omnipotent* Father? And in what more *becoming* Way could he have expressed that *Omnipotent* Power which he derived from his Father, than in those *astonishing* Miracles of Love which he wrought in the World.

3dly, The *excellent* and *divine* Doctrine which he taught was such as *became* the *only begotten Son*. For certainly if we consider the *excellent* Frame and Contrivance of the *Christian Religion*, we cannot but confess it to be most *Divine* and *Godlike*, most *worthy* of that *infinite* Wisdom and Goodness from whence it was derived. For *Religion* in general is the means of advancing *Rational Beings* to that Perfection and Happiness for which the *great* Creator hath designed and intended them; and certainly never was there any *Religion* in the *World* more adapted to advance this *noble* Design of *God* than that which our *Saviour* hath taught: For as for its *Agenda*, what it requires to be done, they all consist in acting reasonably, and according to the Dignity of our Nature, in *thinking, speaking, and practising*; in *loving and hating, desiring and delighting, hoping and fearing*, as becomes *Reasonable Beings* placed in our Condition and Circumstances; and do require nothing of us but that we should regulate our Practice by the Rules of *Right Reason*, and direct all our Faculties and Affections to their *proper* Ends and Objects; and when we come to this Pitch, always to *think* that which is most *reasonable*, and always to *practise* what we think so, then we are advanced to the *topmost* Round of our Perfection, in which is founded the *utmost* Happiness we are capable of: So that in all the Course of our *Christian Practice* we are in a *direct* Progression and Tendency towards our Perfection and Happiness. And as for the *Credenda* of *Christianity*, the Doctrines it requires us to believe, they are all of them pregnant with the most *strong* and *vehement* Motives to engage us to the Practice of what it enjoins; Motives that have such a *Potent*, I had almost said *Omnipotent* Force in them, that 'tis *impossible* for any Man heartily to believe, and throughly to weigh and consider them, and not be effectually persuaded by them! Since therefore it was so highly convenient that the *Son of God* in Person should come down from *Heaven* among us, that so the Dignity of his Person might give Authority to that *Religion* by which the *World* was to be governed; and since he did come down upon this *honourable* Errand, it was impossible for him to have taught any Doctrine that could more effectually have promoted the *great* End of *Religion*, or more fully expressed his *infinite* Wisdom, and Goodness, and *Zeal* for the Welfare of the Souls of Men, than that which is contained in the *Christian Religion*, which is every way so adapted to make Men *good and happy*, so accommodated to the Nature and Condition of Mankind, that there is nothing could better *become* the *only begotten Son* to teach in the *World*, or that could be more *worthy* of all those *infinite* Perfections that are lodged in his Nature, and do speak him to be the most *genuine* Offspring of the most *High*. For so *excellent* was his Doctrine, that his very Enemies were astonished at the *Wisdom* that was given him, *Mark* 6. 2, 3. and wondred at the *gracious* Words that proceeded out of his Mouth, *Luke* 4. 22. Well therefore might he say of himself, *I am the Light of the World, he that followeth me shall not walk in Darkness, but shall have the Light of Life, John* 8. 12.

4thly, And lastly, The *incomparable* Sanctity and Purity of his Life was such as very well *became* the *only begotten Son*. For as it was highly *convenient* that he should come down into the *World*, and in his *own* Person teach us that *Religion* by which he intended to govern us, that thereby he might stamp it with a more *awful* Authority; so to render it more successful, it was no less *convenient* that he should come down in *our* Natures, that therein he might be capable of practising what he taught us, and setting us an Example of what he would have us to do, that so we might see that he enjoined nothing upon us but what was *practicable*, and what did become the most *glorious* Person that ever did assume our Natures; that thereby we might be encouraged to our Duty, and animated with a *noble* Emulation of treading in his blessed Footsteps. Since therefore all this was so highly *convenient*, and the *Son of God* in Compliance with this Convenience did actually assume *our* Nature, it was impossible for him to lead a Life that *better* comported with this Design of his *Incarnation*, or *better* became the Dignity and Excellency of his Person than he did. For now that he was become a Man, he was obliged to act *suitably* to his Nature; and should he have done any thing

that was *unsuitable* to the State and Circumstances of his Nature, he would not have acted becoming himself. So that it was highly *convenient* that he should become a Man, and being a Man it was indispensably *necessary* that he should live like a *wise* and a *good* Man in the Condition and Relations wherein he was placed, and nothing could be more *worthy* of or *becoming* him, then so to do, tho' he was still the *only begotten Son* of the Father. For it is the Glory of God himself that he always acts most reasonably according to the State and Relations of a God; and therefore when God becomes Man by assuming *our* Nature to his *own*, it is his Glory to act most reasonably in the State and Relations of a Man. And thus did the *blessed Jesus* do in the whole Course of his Conversation upon Earth; for his Life was a most *exact* Pattern of all *humane* Virtues, in which all that is *ornamental* to *humane* Nature was represented in its *fairest* Colours: There you may see a *fair* Example of the most *ardent* Love to, and *constant* Dependance upon God, of the most *profound* Humility, and *perfect* Resignation to his *Heavenly* Will. There you may behold the Moderation of *Humane* Passions and Appetites set forth to the Life, and fairly delineated in its most *exquisite* Perfections; in a word, there you will find *Loyalty* and *Submission* to *Superiours*, *Fidelity* and *Justice* to *Equals*, *Courtesy* and *Candor*, and *Condescension* to *Inferiours*, *universal* Love, and an *unbounded* Charity to all practised to the Height and Exactness; and which way soever you turn your Eyes on this *fair* Monument of Virtues, you can discover nothing but what is *lovely* and *adorable*, and infinitely becoming the *only begotten Son* of the Father.

Having thus explained and demonstrated the Proposition to you, I shall conclude with these four Inferences from this *fourfold* Glory of the *Word* which they saw.

I. They saw the *glorious* Splendor which invested his Person at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*: From whence I infer his Deputation from the most *High* God, and Father of all Things, to be his Representative and Vice-Roy in the *Christian* Church. For this *visible* Glory with which he was invested, was always the *peculiar* Character of the *immediate* Representative of God; and therefore by way of Appropriation it is called *the Glory of God*, and *the Glory of the Lord*; and wheresoever God, as *Supream* Monarch and Governour, is represented as residing and taking up his *Royal* Habitation, there you always find him displaying himself in this *visible* Glory and Splendor. Thus when by the *Eternal Word* he was represented among the *Jews* as their *supream* Lord and Governour, he always manifested his *Majestick* Presence among them by some *bright* and *shining* Appearance; the first Instance of which was his Appearance to *Moses* from out of the *burning Bush* upon Mount *Sinai*, where he first acted under God the Father as *Sovereign* King of *Israel* in commissioning *Moses* to be their Captain and Leader out of *Egypt*; for here it is said, that he *appeared in a flame of fire*, *Exod* 3. 2. that is, in a *visible* Glory that resembled the Brightness of a Flame of Fire. For this Mountain he had chosen for the Seat and Throne of his *Majestical* Residence, from whence he intended to give Laws to *Israel*, and to exert his *Royal* Dominion over them; and therefore here he appears in that *visible* Glory which was always the Character of the *divine* King, and *immediate* Representative of God to that People. And indeed if that be true which *Josephus* tells us, this Mountain was looked upon as the Habitation of God, long before ever *Moses* came thither; for therefore, says *Josephus*, did *Moses* drive his Father *Jethro's* Flock thither to feed, because of all other Places it most abounded with Pasture,

Jos. Antiq. l. 2.
p. 60.

διὰ τὸ εἶναι ἔχον ἐν διατεταμένῳ αὐτῷ τὸν θεὸν οὐ καταφανδύσας πρὸς τοὺς οὐ τοιμῶν
τῶν ἱερατῶν εἰς αὐτὸ τῶν ποιμένων; that is, *because it was famed that*

God dwelt there, which was the Reason that the Shepherds never durst to drive their Flocks thither, because of the Sacredness of the Place. And if this Report be true, then it seems this Mountain was the Seat of the *Royal* Residence of the *Eternal Word* before ever *Moses* came thither, and consequently the Glory and Brightness in which *Moses* saw him appear, was nothing but the Display of his *Majestick* Presence which did there make its *ordinary* Abode. But whether that be *true* or *false*,

false, it's most plain and apparent, that wheresoever he appeared as the King of *Israel*, or Representative of *God* to them, he always clothed himself in a *visible* Glory and Splendor. Thus he appeared to them in a Pillar of Fire, that is, in a most *bright* and *luminous* Form, when he conducted them thro' the *Red-Sea*, and the Wilderness; and when he came down upon Mount *Sinai* to give the Law to them, it's said that the Glory in which they beheld him was *like devouring Fire*, *Exod. 24. 17.* that is, it was unspeakably *bright* and *refulgent*, even like that of a most *intense* and *vehement* Fire; and in all this *radiant* Glory did he display himself from between the Cherubims when he removed from the Mountain, and chose the Tabernacle for the Seat of his *future* Residence and *Royal* Abode. Thus wheresoever he appeared in his *Kingly* Majesty as the *publick* Representative of his Father, this *visible* Glory is always made mention of, as that which was the *peculiar* Character of his Presence and Person. 'Tis true, 'tis recorded of *Moses* that when he came down from the Vision upon the Mount, his Face shone so brightly that the *Israelites* were not able to approach him; which seems to argue that this *visible* Glory was not so *peculiar* to the *Eternal Word* as his Father's Representative, as we would have it, since we plainly see it was *common* to *Moses* with him. But this doth no ways destroy our Assertion; because it's plain that *that* Glory which covered the Face of *Moses*, was all derived from the Glory of the *Eternal Word*, with whom for *forty* Days he had conversed in the Mount. For *Moses* being sent down as an Apostle to the *Jews*, to promulgate those Laws to them which he had received upon the Mount, the *Eternal Word*, to convince the *unbelieving Jews* that he had sent him, reflects upon his Face some Rays of Glory from that Sphere of Light in which he appeared to, and conversed with him, that *that* might be an *ocular* Demonstration to them, that *Moses* came from him, and was commissioned by him to preach and promulgate his Laws to them. So that *Moses* his Glory being derived from the *Word*, declared him to be his Apostle and Minister; even as the Glory of the *Word* being derived from the Father, declared him to be his Representative and Vice Roy; so that from its shining upon the Face of *Moses*, it by no means follows that this *visible* Glory is not the *peculiar* Character of *God's immediate* Representative; because that which shone upon his Face was only the *Parhelius* or Reflection of the *visible* Glory of him who was *God's immediate* Representative. For so the Earth also is said to *shine with the Glory of the God of Israel*, *Ezek. 43. 2.* and as the Glory with which it shone was not the Glory of the Earth, but the Glory of the *God of Israel*; so neither was that Glory upon the Face of *Moses* the Glory of *Moses*, but the Glory of that *divine* Person, with whom he had conversed, derived to, and reflected upon him; and it being still the *proper* Glory of that *divine* Person, may very well be said to be the *peculiar* Character of his being the *immediate* Representative of *God*, notwithstanding it reflected from him upon *Moses*; especially considering that this *reflected* Glory upon *Moses* his Face was to be an Evidence to the *Jews* that he came down to them as an Apostle from the *Eternal Word* with Authority to publish, and declare his Laws to them. For if this *derivative* Splendor was an Evidence that *Moses* came down as an Apostle from that *divine* Person on the Mount, then the *original* Splendor of that *divine* Person whence it was derived and reflected, was at least an *equal* Evidence that he came down upon the Mount as the Apostle, and *immediate* Representative of the most *High God* himself.

And in the same manner we find that the *Word Incarnate* did give Evidence to the Commission of his *Christian Apostles*; for upon the *Day of Pentecost* when they were assembled together, it is said that *there appeared unto them cloven Tongues like as of fire, and sat upon every one of them*, *Acts 2. 3.* that is, there were several Flashes or Beams of Glory, which like *bright* Flames of Fire, did cleave asunder in many Places, according to the *natural* Motion of Flames, of which every Part as it extends it self in Length grows more *Spire-like* or *Pyramidal*, and so divides from the part next to it; and upon the Head of every one of the Apostles, did one of these *divided* Flames of Glory rest in the Form of a Tongue,

which like a Flame grows *sharper* and *sharper* towards the Top : For thus the *Hebrew Idiom* for a Flame of Fire uses the *Tongue* of Fire, because of the Resemblance that is between them, *Isa. 5. 24.* So that as the *Eternal Word* did evidence to the *Jews* the Apostleship of *Moses* by that *visible* Glory which he reflected on his Face, so did the *Word Incarnate* evidence to the *Christian Church* the Apostleship of the *Twelve* by this *visible* Glory which he derived upon them. For now, according to *John the Baptist's* Prediction of him, he baptized them *with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, Luke 3. 16.* that is, by the *outward* Sign of that *visible* Glory which rested like Fire upon them, he solemnly initiated them into their *Apostleship*, and declared them to be the *Heralds* of his Will to the World. And as this *visible* Glory with which he baptized them, was an Evidence of their being sent *from*, and commissioned by *him* to bear his Authority, and represent his Person ; so that *visible* Glory with which he was baptized from *Heaven*, first in the River *Jordan*, and afterwards upon Mount *Tabor*, was an *undoubted* Evidence that he was sent *from above* to be his Father's Representative in the *Church* : For if their shining with his Glory was an Evidence of their being invested with his Authority, then his shining with his Father's Glory must be an *equal* Evidence of his being invested with the Authority of his Father. And as this *visible* Glory was always the *peculiar* Character of God's *immediate* Representative, and the *Royal Crown* and *Robes* as it were with which the most *High* adorned him at his *Inauguration*, and Investment with his *own* *Kingly* Authority ; so *St. Peter* expressly tells *Cornelius* and his Company, that *God had anointed him with the Holy Ghost, and with Power, Acts 10. 13.* that is, by that *outward* Sign of the *visible* Glory in which the *Holy Ghost* descended upon him, he had invested him with *Regal* Power, and deputed and declared him to be King of the *Church*. And this in all probability was the Reason why he forbade his Disciples to declare his Transfiguration till after his *Resurrection from the Dead, Mark 9. 9.* because he knew that if they did, the *Jews* would not believe it, but would maliciously interpret it to be a *false* Pretence of his to the Title of God's *immediate* Representative and Vice-Roy, that *visible* Glory in which he appeared being the *proper* Character of that *divine* King by whom the most *High God* had formerly governed them ; and therefore in all the History of his Life you find he did industriously avoid openly to avow his *Regal* Authority, and only insinuates it by Consequences and *obscure* Intimations. For so violently were they prejudiced against his being their *King*, upon the account of his *obscure* Parentage, and *mean* Condition, that he could not but foresee how *unseasonable* it would yet be publicly to own his *Regal* Authority, and consequently the Glory of his Transfiguration which did so apparently infer it ; till by more *miraculous* Effects, and particularly by his *Resurrection from the Dead*, he had sufficiently proved and demonstrated it ; and then he openly declares without any Reserve, that *all Power was given him in Heaven and Earth, Matth. 28. 18.* Since therefore it is so apparent by this *Characteristical* Glory, in which his Person was inrobed, and which the *Apostle* assures us they saw him invested with, we have all the Reason in the World to conclude, that the most *High God* hath deputed him to be King and Lord of the *Church*. For when the *Apostle* tells us that they saw this *visible* Glory which shone upon him at his *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*, he doth as good as say that they saw all the Solemnity of his *divine* Coronation, that they beheld the most *High God* circling his Brows with the *Royal* Diadem, and investing his *sacred* Body with the *Imperial* Robes of the *great* King of the World. So that if it be true what *St. John* says, that they did see this Glory, (as we have all the Reason in the World to conclude it is, because he offered to seal his Testimony of it with his Blood, and the other *two* that saw it with him, actually did so) then we cannot but acknowledge the *blessed Jesus* to be *our* King, to whose *divine* Authority we are bound to pay the *lowest* Homage and Obedience ; and that whenever we wilfully transgress his Laws, we do openly Rebel against our most *rightful* Sovereign, to whose Service we are bound by all *possible* Ties and Obligations.

2. They

2. They saw the Glory of that *miraculous* Power which he exerted in the Course of his Ministry; from whence I infer the Credibility of the *Christian Religion*: For the many *stupendous* Miracles that he wrought, were a most *plain* and *unquestionable* Evidence of a *Divine* Power residing in him, and accompanying his Ministry. For never were there so many *miraculous* Effects produced, either *before* or *since*, in the World, by the most *renowned* Workers of Miracles that ever were; and all that hath been done by the most *famous* Magicians, that are recorded in History, were but like the *little* Tricks and Delusions of *Jugglers*, compared with the *wondrous* Works of our *Saviour*; and yet 'tis apparent that his Education had been most *plain* and *simple*, that he never had been instructed in any *Mathematical* Science, or *mystical* Rites, or in any *other* Art of performing Wonders, either by *Humane* Wit or *Diabolical* Assistance; but was bred up under the Care of his *poor honest* Parents, who were forced to earn their Bread with the Sweat of their Brows, and so in all Probability was trained up in his Father's Profession, that so by his *daily* Labour he might be able to contribute to the Charge of his Maintenance. And yet 'tis plain, this *home bred* Person sometimes, only by speaking of a Word, sometimes meerly by the Touch of his Hand, sometimes by a *silent* Virtue proceeding from him without any *outward* Sign intervening, did *more* and far *greater* Wonders in *three* or *four* Years Time, then all the most *skilful* Physicians, *Magicians* and *Mathematicians* could ever do either *before* or *after* him. Now how was it possible that ever such a Person should ever have accomplished such *great* and *mighty* Things as he did, had he not been endued with Power from above? And if he was endued with such a Power, what *greater* Evidence can we desire of the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine? For it is not *supposable* that the *God* of Truth would have endued our *Saviour* with this *miraculous* Power, had that Doctrine been *false* which he sought to confirm by it; because in so doing he would have openly *patronized* a Cheat, and designedly contributed to the Propagation of an Imposture, which is utterly *inconsistent* with his Truth and Veracity: So that now the Truth of *Christianity* finally resolves into the Veracity of *God*, which is the Foundation of all the Certainty in the World. For admitting that *God* can either *deceive* or be *deceived*, we do not know but our Faculties may be constantly imposed upon, and then there is nothing in Nature that we can be certain of: So that if it be true, as St. *John* here testifies, that they did see the Glory of our Saviour's Miracles, that is a most *undeniable* Evidence of the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine; and that they did see it, I think is as evident: For it is not imaginable that any *single* Man would openly testify a *known* Lye without some Temptation inducing him thereunto; much less that so many *Hundreds* of Persons as the *Eye Witnesses* of our Saviour's Miracles were, should conspire to cheat the World, not only when they had *no* Temptation to it, but when they had *all* the Reason in the World against it; for they saw their Master suffer a *shameful* Death before their Eyes, by which they might easily divine what their *own* Fate would be if they persevered to preach up his Miracles and Doctrine, which they could not resolve to do without bidding Adieu to all their *temporal* Hopes, and engaging themselves to undergo all the Miseries and Calamities in the World; and if they testified what they knew to be *false*, they transgressed the Rule of their *own* Religion, and thereby forfeited all their Hopes of a *blessed* Immortality in the Life to come. And can it be imagined that so many Men should at the *same* Time so unanimously agree to report and testify the Miracles of a Man whom they had lately seen crucified before their Eyes, when they knew in their *own* Consciences, that it was all a *meer* Forgery, and could not but foresee, that by persisting in it, they should incur an *inevitable* Ruin in this Life, and an *eternal* Damnation in the Life to come? Was there ever such a *desperate* Piece of Madness heard of from the Beginning of the World to this Day? And yet this *monstrous* Thing, which is by a *thousand* Times more *incredible* than any thing in the *Christian Religion*, we must not only imagine may be, but believe that it really was; or else confess that St. *John* says true here, that they did see the Glory of his Miracles, which is so *undoubted*

doubted an Evidence of the Truth of his Doctrine. Wherefore since we are compassed about with such a Cloud of Witnesses, let us by a *lively* and *vigorous* Faith adhere to the Truth of our *Holy Religion*, and then we shall find it *quick* and *mighty* through God, to the casting down the strong Holds of our *vicious* Habits, and implanting in us all those *divine* Dispositions which are necessary to qualify us for those *endless* Joys which our *Blessed Lord* hath promised to, and prepared for us.

3. They saw the Glory of that *divine* and *incomparable* Doctrine which he taught: From whence I infer the Unreasonableness of Mens entertaining *mean* and *contemptible* Opinions of the *Christian Faith*, since it is so *excellent* in it self that it was a Glory to the Son of God to be the Author of it. We have a sort of Men among us who would fain be accounted the *Wits* and *Virtuoso's* of the Age, who pretend to acknowledge a *God*, and a *Providence*, and all the Principles of *Natural Religion*, and yet openly profess a very *mean* and *contemptible* Opinion of *Christianity*, and take all Occasions to represent it as a *ridiculous* Fiction, fit only to be imposed upon the *credulous* Vulgar. But I would fain know of these *mighty Men of Reason*, what *plausible* Pretence they can urge for this their *bold* and *blasphemous* Centure: Is it because *Christianity* is a *Revealed Religion*? Or, because there is any thing in it that is *unworthy* of *God* whom we pretend to be the Revealer of it? Or because there wants *credible* Evidence of its being revealed by him? If they pretend to reject it because 'tis a *Revealed Religion*, I would beseech them to consider how it could have comported with the Goodness of *God* never to make any Revelation of his Will to the World, when the Generality of Men were lost in such a *Mid-night* of Ignorance in respect of *Natural Religion*; how even the *natural* Notions of the *Deity* were corrupted into all manner of Follies and Vanities, and Men had formed Religions not only *hateful* to *God*, but *nauseous* to all that were *wise* among themselves; and how defective also they were in the *best* and *purest* Precepts of *Morality*, having at last consecrated their Vices, and enthroned them among the Graces of *Religion*: In which *miserable* State of Things, it is so far from being *unreasonable* to expect a Revelation, that 'tis hardly *possible* to vindicate *God's* Goodness without supposing it. For should he have *for ever* left Mankind in this *bewildered* State without Revelation, he would have been more wanting to Man, who is the *noblest* of all his *earthly* Creatures, than he is to the most *contemptible* Animal; for to his *meanest* Creatures he hath given *sufficient* Ability to attain the *highest* End of their Beings, which Mankind can hardly be supposed to have in his *corrupt degenerate* State, without supposing a *new* Revelation from *Heaven*. For we have an *innate* Notion within us of a *Supreme Being* above us, that is superlatively *good*, and endued with all *possible* Perfection; our *natural* Reason dictates to us, that to converse with and enjoy him *for ever*, is the *highest* Good that we are capable of, and the most *suitable* to our *rational* Natures; but by what means we may be reconciled to him in this State of Revolt whereinto we are fallen, and how at length we may arrive to the Enjoyment of him, could never have been sufficiently made known to us in this *Maze* of Ignorance wherein we were involved, without some *divine* Revelation: And therefore to suppose Revelation *unreasonable* in our *miserable* State and Circumstances, is to suppose it *unreasonable* for the *great* and *good* Governor of the World to furnish his *noblest* Creature *Man* with *sufficient* means to obtain his most *excellent* End. And if it be acknowledged that there is a Revelation, because it is so highly *reasonable* that there should be, let us consider which of all the Religions in the World, that pretends to be from *God*, is most likely to be the Revelation of his Will, and then I doubt not, if we impartially compare them, but our reason will soon give its Vote for *Christianity*. If you enquire for this Revelation of the *Enthusiastick Poets* of the *Heathen*, how *wild* and *extravagant* is that *Religion* which we find in the *Theology* of *Hesiod*, the *Hymns* of *Orpheus*, the *Odes* of *Pindar*, and the *Poems* of *Homer*, *Virgil*, and *Ovid*? If you consult the *Heathen Oracles* of *Delphos*, *Dodona*, and *Jupiter Hammon*, how *vain* and *frivolous*, how *uncertain* and *fallacious*, are all their Responses?

Besides

Besides that, the Books and Records of them are long since perished and consumed. If you enquire for this Revelation in the *Old Roman Theology*, which *Numa* pretended to receive from his Goddess *Egeria*, that also is lost, being burnt by the *Roman Senate*, as *Valerius Maximus* tells us; for that it contained many Things in it not only destructive to the Gods and Religions of other Countries, but also to his own and the *Roman Profession*. Or shall we confront *Christianity* with the *Alchoran* of *Mahomet*, which he often pretends to have received from God? There we shall find every Page almost abounding with monstrous Cheats and Impostures, the whole being nothing else but a confused Medley of impious and contemptible Fopperies, heaped together by a *Triumvirate* of *Arians*, *Jews*, and *Pagans*, who were all of them known Impostors in the Ages wherein they lived: So that to confront *Christianity* with any of these, is to light up a Rush Candle, and resolve to outface the Sun with it. For as for *Christianity*, 'tis a Religion made up of the most divine and Godlike Institutions; its Precepts being such as are most worthy of God, enjoining nothing but what is either true Godliness, and most generous Morality, or what are the most efficacious Means and Instruments of promoting them. And as for its Doctrine, it partly consists of those Principles of *Natural Religion* which all wise Men, of whatsoever Nation or Religion, have owned and acknowledged, such as the *Existence*, *Unity*, and *Providence* of the Godhead, the *Immortality of the Soul*, and the Rewards and Punishments of another Life, together with the great Day of Accounts, wherein Men shall receive according to what they have done in the Flesh: And even the Doctrine of the *Holy Trinity*, which is the profoundest Mystery of all our Religion, hath been owned and professed by the greatest and most famous Philosophers that ever were. And as for those Doctrines that are purely *Christian*, such as the *Birth* and *Life*, and *Death*, the *Resurrection* and *Ascension* of our Saviour, together with his Sitting on the Right-hand of God, and coming at the last Day to judge the World, they are all of them so excellently contrived to serve the great Ends of Religion, so wonderfully pregnant with Motives and Arguments to engage Men to the greatest Purity and Goodness, that by their own native Beauty and excellent Contrivance, they manifest themselves to be the Products of a divine Wisdom. So that there can be no reasonable Pretence to condemn *Christianity* either because it is a *Revealed Religion*, or because it contains any thing in it that is any ways unworthy of the Revealer: And that there wants not sufficient Evidence to demonstrate it to be the Revelation of God, I have already proved in the former Inference. So that after all the lewd Talk of these confident Men, it's apparent there is not the least Colour of Reason for their impious Censures of *Christianity*. But alas! It's evident that the Foundation of their Quarrel against it, lies not so much in their Reason, as their Lusts. *Christianity* lays them under severe Restraints, and will not permit them to be wicked in quiet, which provokes them to arm their Wit, and the little Reason that they have against it, that so having baffled, or rather laughed themselves out of their Religion, they may be left at liberty to play the Fools and Madmen without Controul or Disturbance. And I make no doubt but if instead of that strict Piety and Virtue which *Christianity* enjoins, it had but indulged to them the Liberties of the *Heathen Religion*, so that they could have but acted all their Wickedness with Devotion, sacrificed to the Gods in drunken Bowls, and worshipped in the Arms of a Strumpet, there are no Men in the World would have been more zealous *Christians* than they. But let no Man be so foolish as to imagine that he can alter the Nature of Things by laughing at them, or that *Christianity* will cease to be true in Compliance with our wicked Interest and Desires; no, no, Things will be as they are in despite of us, and howsoever we will please to fancy them. And if after all our rude Contempts of Religion, it be found to be true, as I doubt not but it will, we shall be sensible when it is too late that it had been more for our Safety to have play'd before the Mouth of a Cannon while it is spitting Fire, or to have catch'd hold of a Thunderbolt as it comes roaring down from the Clouds, than to have play'd with Religion, and made it the Subject of our impious Scorns and Buffooneries.

4. And Lastly, They saw the Glory of his *immaculate* Holiness and Purity : From whence I infer, That Holiness and *true* Goodness is the *greatest* Glory and Honour to *humane* Nature. For this was the Glory of the *Son of God* himself when he assumed our Nature, and dwelt among us ; and there is nothing more *glorious* in *Christ* than his Goodness ; and notwithstanding those *excellent* Doctrines that he preached, those *stupendious* Miracles that he wrought, and that *visible* Splendor in which he was inrobed, he had not deserved the Name of a *great* and *glorious* Man if he had not been *just* and *charitable*, *temperate*, and *humble*, and *Heavenly-minded* and *eminent* in all those *divine* and *humane* Virtues which are the *proper* Glory and Ornament of *humane* Nature. • For that which makes a Man more *honourable* than a *meer* Animal, and advances us into the *next* Degree of Beings to Angels, is our Reason, by which alone we border upon the Divinity, and do claim Kindred with the *Angelical* Natures. That therefore which is truly our Honour and Glory, consists in living according to that Reason by which we are advanced above all *sublunary* Natures ; that is, in governing our *Passions* and *Appetites*, *Words* and *Actions*, according to those *Eternal* Rules of Righteousness which *Right* Reason dictates to us ; and if instead of doing thus, we wholly resign up our selves to the Dominion of our *brutish* and *unreasonable* Inclinations, we thereby render our selves more *despicable* and *infamous* than the most *beastly* Brutes in all the Creation, and even those *Goats*, and *Wolves*, and *Swine*, and *Tygers*, whom we resemble in our *beastly* Manners, could they see our Shame, would doubtless hiss at us, and reproach us for *Greater* Beasts than themselves ; for they all live *up* to the *best* of their Natures, and regularly pursue the *highest* End for which they were created ; whereas we who are Allied to the *noblest* of Beings, and are created and designed for the most *glorious* Ends, do by our *base* and *unreasonable* Condescensions shamefully under-value our selves in pursuing no Ends but what are extremely *unworthy* of us : So that it had been much more for our Honour and Reputation to have assumed the Shape and Nature of Brutes, when we assumed their Manners and Customs ; for then our Actions would have very well become us, and neither *God* nor *Men* could have justly upbraided us for them. But to lead the Lives of *Brutes* in the Shape and Nature of *Men*, is *monstrous* ; 'tis to advance the *Beast* above the *Man*, to place our *Heels* where Nature hath placed our *Head*, and become our own *Reverse* and *Antipodes*.

DISCOURSE XXIV.

UPON,

JOHN V. 39.

Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal Life.



Y the Scriptures here must be meant the *Old Testament*; for as yet the *greatest Part* of the *New* was *unrevealed*, and the *whole* of it *unwritten*. They were those very Scriptures which the *unbelieving Jews*, to whom our Saviour was now preaching, owned and acknowledged to be the Word of God; *for in them*, says our Saviour, *ye think ye have eternal life*; which it's certain they did not think of any other Scriptures but only those of the *Old Testament*; and they are they, says he, *which testify of me*. And to be sure there were no other Scriptures which could testify of Christ to the *unbelieving Jews*, but only those of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, these being the only Scriptures whose Testimony they credited. But yet the Reason which our Saviour urges to move them to read the *Old Testament*, doth as much oblige us to read the *New* as well as the *Old*, as it did them to read the *Old*; *for in them ye think ye have eternal Life*; that is, in them ye think ye have *eternal Life* promised, and all the Necessaries to be believed, and done by you in order to your obtaining it, proposed to you. And indeed as they thought, so it was; they had *eternal Life* proposed to them in *Hieroglyphicks*; for that was the Mystery of their *Holy of Holies*, that was the Interpretation of their Land of *Canaan*, and the *spiritual* Sense of all their general Promises of good Things to come: They had all the Articles of Faith, and all the Instances of Duty that were necessary to their Attainment of *eternal Life* exhibited to them in the Writings of their Prophets, and the Types and Figures of their Law. For it was by this Rule alone that all the *Holy Men* of the *Jewish Nation* did live and believe; and either this was sufficient to guide and direct them to *eternal Life*, or they were left under a fatal Necessity of falling short of it: It was the *Law of the Lord* that did enlighten their Eyes, and rejoice their Hearts, and convert their Souls; and it was in keeping it that they found great Reward, *Psal. 119. 7, 8, 11*. And therefore either they fell short of the Reward of *eternal Life*, notwithstanding this their Illumination and Conversion, or they found it in keeping that Law by which they were illuminated and converted; and if in keeping their Law they found *eternal Life*, then it's certain that in their Law they had it. So that these Words of our Saviour (*for in them ye think ye have eternal Life*) do not imply that they were mistaken in thinking so, or at least they only imply that they were mistaken in thinking to obtain *eternal Life* by adhering to the *prime* and *literal* Sense of their Law without pursuing the Mystery and *Spiritual* Meaning of it; which was indeed the Error of the *Pharisees*, with whom our Saviour is here discoursing. For the *internal* Sense and Mystery of their Law was the *Gospel*, all whose Articles of Faith, and Precepts of Duty, were (tho' darkly and obscurely) expressed and represented in the Types and Figures of the *Mosaick* Institution. And hence the Apostle tells, that both the *Priests* and their *Oblations*, did serve unto the example, and shadow of heavenly things, *Heb. 8. 5*. So that the heavenly Things contained in the *Gospel* were the substantial Idea's which those *Legal* Types and Patterns contained and represented;

sented ; and the same Author calls that Law a *shadow of good things to come*, Heb. 10. 1. that is, it was an *obscure* Scheme or Prefiguration of the Mercies of the Gospel, of which *eternal Life* is a *principal* Part. Since therefore the Law was nothing else but only the Gospel in *dark* and *obscure* Cyphers, if in *this* we *Christians* have *eternal Life*, in *that* the *Jews* had it also : And therefore the Reason which our *Saviour* here urges to oblige the *Jews* to *search the Scriptures* of the *Old Testament* [*for in them ye think ye have eternal life*] doth at least equally oblige us *Christians* to search the Scriptures both of the *Old* and *New*. For if they had *just* Reason to think they had *eternal Life* in the *Old Testament*, and were thereupon obliged to search into it, we have rather *more* Reason to think that we have *eternal Life* in the *New*, since the *New Testament* is nothing else but only the *Old* decyphered and unriddled ; and therefore we must not only have *eternal Life* in *this*, as they had in *that*, but we must also have it far more expressly than they. In the Prosecution of this Argument therefore, I shall endeavour these *two* Things.

I. To shew you that in the *Holy Scriptures* we have *eternal Life*.

II. That this is a very *forcible* Reason to oblige us to search them. *

I. First, That in the *Holy Scriptures* we have *eternal Life* ; that is, that in them we have *eternal Life* proposed to us, together with all that is *necessary* to be believed, and practised by us in order to our obtaining it ; or in other words, that the *Holy Scripture* is a *sufficient* Rule both of Faith and Manners to guide and direct us to *eternal Happiness*. And this is *one* Article of the Faith of the *Church of England*, which we are required to explain to the People ; for so in her sixth Article our *Church* professes, *that the Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to Salvation ; so that whatsoever is not read therein, or may be proved thence, is not required of any Man that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation*. Now to make the *Scripture* a *sufficient* Rule as to all Things *necessary* to Salvation, there are *two* Things *necessary* ; *First*, That it should be *full* ; and *Secondly*, That it should be *clear* : Both which the *Holy Scripture* is in an *eminent* Degree, as containing in it all that is *necessary* to be believed, and done, in order to *eternal Life*. And this will evidently appear from these three following Propositions :

1. That the *Holy Spirit* inspired the Writers of the *Scripture* with all that is *necessary* to *eternal Life*.

2. That they Preached to the World all those *Necessaries* with which the *Holy Spirit* inspired them.

3. That all those *necessary* Truths which they Preached, are comprehended in these *Sacred Writings* of theirs of which the *Holy Scripture* consists.

1. That the *Holy Spirit* inspired the Writers of the *Scripture* with all that is *necessary* to *eternal Life*. For *first*, our *Saviour*, by whom they were originally instructed, declares, that as the *Father* loved him, and shewed him all things that himself did, John 5. 20. so he had made known to them all things that he had heard of his *Father*, John 17. 8. And then when he went from them, and ceased to instruct them in his own Person, he promised that by his *Spirit* he would teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever he had said unto them. John 14. 26. and that by the same *Spirit* he would guide them into all Truth, John 16. 13. If therefore the *Spirit* did perform this Promise to them, (as there is no doubt but he did) then we are sure that he did teach them over again whatsoever *Christ* had taught them before ; and if *Christ* had taught them whatsoever he had heard of his *Father*, (as he declares he had) then it is certain either that he taught them all Things *necessary* to *eternal Life*, or that he himself had not heard from his *Father* all Things that are necessary thereunto.

2. That

● That as they were taught by the Spirit, all Things *necessary* to *eternal Life*, so what they were taught, they preached and delivered to the World. For so our *Saviour* commanded them to go forth into all the World, and *teach all Nations to observe all those things which he had commanded them*, *Matth. 28. 19, 20.* Which Injunction of his they strictly observed; for so we are told, that in Obedience to it, *they went forth, and preached every where*, *Mark 16. 20.* And that their preaching extended to all Things *necessary* to Salvation, is evident from their own Testimony: For thus *St. Paul* tells the *Ephesians* that he had *not shunned to declare unto them the whole Counsel of God*, *Acts 20. 27.* And to be sure in the whole Counsel of God, all that is *necessary* to Salvation must be included. And concerning that Gospel which he had preached to the *Corinthians*, he thus pronounces, *By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in Memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain*, *1 Cor. 15. 1, 2.* But how could they be saved by that Gospel he preached to them, unless it contained in it all Things *necessary* to Salvation? And this very Gospel which the Apostles in their constant Ministry proposed to the World, *St. James* calls the *ingrafted Word*, which is able to *save our Souls*, *Jam. 1. 21.* And for the same Reason it is also called the *Word of Reconciliation*, *2 Cor. 5. 19.* The *Word of Salvation*, *Acts 13. 26.* And the *Word of Life*, *Acts 5. 20.* And the *savour of life unto life*, *2 Cor. 2. 16.* And also the *Power of God unto Salvation, to every one that believes*, *Rom. 1. 17.* Neither of which it could be justly styled, supposing it to be *defective* in any thing *necessary* to the *eternal Happiness* of Men.

3. And lastly, That all those *necessary* Truths which they preached, are comprehended in those Writings of theirs. of which the *Holy Scripture* consists. It is true, before the *Christian Doctrine* was collected into those *Scriptures* of which the *New Testament* now consists, it was all conveyed by *Oral Tradition* from the Mouths of the Teachers, to the Ears of the Disciples; but in a little Time those holy Men who first preached it, found an *absolute Necessity* of committing it to Writing, as a much surer Way of preserving it *uncorrupted*, and transmitting it down to all *succeeding Generations*; for thus *Eusebius* tells us*,
That the Romans not being satisfied with St. Peter's preaching of Christianity to them, earnestly desired St. Mark, his Companion, * Hist. Eccles. 1. 2. c. 15.
that he would leave them in Writing, a standing Monument of that Doctrine which St. Peter had delivered to them by Word of Mouth, which was the Occasion, says he, of the Writing of St. Mark's Gospel: Which thing St. Peter understanding by a Revelation of the Spirit, being highly pleased with their earnest Desire, he confirmed it by his own Authority, that it might afterwards be read in the Churches. It seems in those Days the Romans did not think oral or unwritten Traditions a sufficient
 ● *Conservatory of divine Truths, nor did their Bishops then forbid the reading of the Scriptures to the Laity in their own Language. After which he tells us*, that St. Matthew and St. John were the only Dis-* * L. 3. c. 24.
ciples of our Lord, who had left written Commentaries of the things which they had preached behind them; and it was, says he, Necessity that impelled them to write. For Matthew having preached the Faith to the Hebrews, and intending to go from them to other Nations wrote his Gospel in his own Country Language, that thereby he might supply the want of his Presence to those whom he left behind him. And afterwards when Mark and Luke had published their Gospels, John, who had hitherto only preached the Gospel by Word of Mouth, being at length moved by the same Reason, betook himself to write. And the Three former Gospels, says he, arriving to the Knowledge of all Men, and particularly of St. John, he approved them, and with his own Testimony confirmed the Truth of them. From which Relation it's evident, that that which moved those holy Men to commit their Gospels to Writing, was this, that they judged it necessary for the Conservation of the Christian Doctrine, that to these in their Absence might be standing Monuments of the Faith, to preach that Gospel to Mens Eyes which they had preached to their Ears: And if they wrote to preserve the Faith, to be sure they would leave no necessary or essential Part of it unwritten. There are several Propositions in these

Gospels which, though very *useful*, are far from being *essential* Parts of *Christianity*; and can we imagine that those *holy Men* who wrote on purpose to conserve *Christianity*, should take so much Care to write many Things which are not *necessary* Parts, and in the mean time omit any Things that are? *Eusebius* tells us of *St. Mark* in particular, *ὅτις ὁ μαρκοῦς ἐπεὶ ἦν ἑρμηνεύων τὰς λέξεις τοῦ κυρίου, ὡς καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι, ἐκείνην τὴν ἀποστολὴν ἔγραψε, ὅπως οἱ ἀκούοντες οὐκ ἔσονται ἐν ἁπορίας, ἀλλὰ ἐν ἁγνότητι καὶ ἀσφάλειᾳ τοῦ λόγου τοῦ κυρίου*; i. e. he took great Care of this more especially, not to pretermitt any of those Things which he had heard, (even from *St. Peter*) nor to affix any thing to them that was false: And if he were so careful not to omit any Thing, to be sure he would be particularly careful not to omit any Thing which he judged *necessary* to the eternal Happiness of Men. But what need we depend upon *humane* Authority, when as, if we consult those *Sacred Writings* themselves, (which so far as they go, all *Christians* allow to be the *Word of God*) we shall find they give this Testimony of themselves, that they comprehend in them all Things *necessary* to eternal Life. For thus the Writers of the *New Testament* testify of the *Old*, That they are able to make us wise unto Salvation through Faith which is in *Jesus Christ*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. And if the *Old Testament* alone was able to do this, then much more the *Old* and *New* together; but how could they make Men wise to Salvation, if they were defective in any Article that is *necessary* to Salvation? And then the same Author goes on and tells us, that all *Scripture* is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works, v. 16, 17. And if the *Old Scriptures* were sufficient to make the Man of God perfect, and to furnish him thoroughly unto all good Works, one would think that the *New* and *Old* together should not be defective. For that the *Scriptures* of the *New Testament* as well as of the *Old* contain in them all Things *necessary* to eternal Life, they themselves do plainly testify of themselves: For thus *St. Luke* in the Beginning of his Gospel tells his *Theophilus*, to whom he writes, that forasmuch as many had set forth a Declaration of those Things that were surely believed among *Christians*, it seemed good unto him also having had a perfect understanding of all Things from the first, to write them down in order, that he might know the Certainty of those Things wherein he had been instructed: From whence I infer, That supposing *St. Luke* performed what he promised, his Gospel must contain a full Declaration of the *Christian Religion*: For, First, By promising to give an Account of those Things which were surely believed among *Christians*, he engaged himself to give an entire Account of *Christianity*, unless we will suppose that there were some Parts of *Christianity* which the *Christians* of that Time did not surely believe. Secondly, In promising to give an Account of those Things of which he had a perfect Understanding from the first, and in which his *Theophilus* had been instructed, he also engages himself to give a compleat Account of the whole Religion, unless we will suppose that there were some Parts of this Religion which *St. Luke* did not perfectly understand, and in which *Theophilus* had not been before instructed. Thus also *St. John* testifies of his Gospel, Chap. 20. 31. These Things are written, that ye might believe that *Jesus* is the *Christ* the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life through his Name. And if it be objected that by these Things the Apostle only means the Miracles of *Christ* which are the Motives of our Belief, and not his Doctrines which are to be believed by us; this is notoriously false, since by these Things *St. John* means his Gospel in which not only the Miracles, but the Doctrines of *Christ* are contained; and therefore in his first Epistle, chap. 5. 13. he saith, These Things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God that ye may know that ye have Eternal Life, and that ye may believe, or continue to believe on the Name of the Son of God; Where by These Things it's plain he means only that *Christian Doctrine* which he had been teaching throughout the whole Epistle. From which two Places I argue, That all Things *necessary* to *Eternal Life* are written, because he expressly tells us that These Things were written to this end, that they might beget and nourish in us that Faith by which we may obtain *Eternal Life*; but if that Faith which these written Things was designed to beget in us, be not sufficient to *Eternal Life*, then

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were these Things written in vain, and the End of writing them, which was that we might obtain *Eternal Life*, by believing them, was wholly frustrated; but if that Faith were *sufficient* to *Eternal Life*, then these *written* Things which begot that Faith, and were the Object of it, must contain in them all Things *necessary* to *Eternal Life*; for how can they beget in us a Faith that is *sufficient* to *Eternal Life*, unless they propose to our Faith all Things that are *necessary* thereunto?

And thus I have endeavoured to demonstrate from *Scripture* it self, which all agree is the *Word of God*, and consequently the most *concluding* Authority in the World, that the *Holy Scripture* is in it self a *sufficient* Rule of Faith and Manners to direct Men to *Eternal Life*. And if this be so, I would fain know by what Warrant or Authority any Man or Church, can pretend to obtrude upon the Faith of *Christians* any *unwritten Traditions*, or Doctrines of Faith, and Rules of Worship, not recorded in *Scripture* as of equal Authority with those recorded in *Scripture*, and equally *necessary* to the *Eternal Happiness* of Men. For that there have been such bold Imposers in the *Christian World* *Irenæus* assures us in the 2d Chapter of his 2d Book against *Heresies*; where he tells us of a sort of *Hereticks* who taught, That the Truth could not be found in the *Scriptures* by those to whom *Tradition* was unknown; for as much as it was not delivered by *Writing*, but by *Word of Mouth*. And these *Hereticks**, as *Tertullian* observes, confessed indeed that the *Apostles* were ignorant,

* De Prae. Hæret. c. 2.

and that they did not at all differ among themselves in their Preaching, but said they revealed not all Things unto all Men; some Things they taught openly and to all, some Things secretly, and to a few; which secret Things were the *unwritten Traditions* which they sought to impose upon the Faith of *Christians*. And how far the Church of Rome it self doth in this matter tread in the Footsteps of these ancient *Hereticks*, is but too notorious: For thus in the Preface of their *Catechism*, it is expressly affirmed by the Council of Trent, That the whole Doctrine to be delivered to the Faithful, is contained in the *Word of God*, which *Word of God* is distributed into *Scripture* and *Tradition*. And in the Council it self they declare, and define, That the Books of *Scripture* and *unwritten Traditions* are to be received and honoured with equal pious Affection and Reverence: In which Words they expressly own another *Word of God* besides the *Scripture*, viz. *Tradition*, which they equalize with the *Scripture* it self. And this is almost *verbatim* the very Assertion which both *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* condemn for *Heresy*; and as they are the same, so we find they are grounded on the same Authority: For those very Texts of *Scripture* which those ancient *Hereticks* urged for their *Tradition*, are urged by *Bellarmino* for the *Tradition* of his Church. Thus for their *Tradition*, as *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* acquaints us, they urged that of St. Paul, We speak Wisdom among them that are perfect; and also, O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy Trust; and again, That good Thing which is committed to thee, keep: All which Texts are urged by *Bellarmino* in his 4th and 5th Books de Verbo Dei, in behalf of that *Tradition* which the Church of Rome contends for: And 'tis something hard that that which was damned for *Heresy* in the *Primitive Church*, should be made an Article of Faith in the present Roman. Not that we do disallow of *Traditions* universally received in all Churches and Ages; for we frankly acknowledge that what is now contained in *Scripture* was *Tradition* before it was *Scripture*, as being first delivered by *Word of Mouth* before it was collected into *Writing*; and therefore whensoever it can be made evident to us that there are any *unwritten Doctrines* bearing the same Stamp of *Divine Authority* with those that are written, we are ready to receive them with the same Veneration as we do the *Scriptures* themselves. For it is not their being written that doth authorize them, but their being from God, and our Saviour, and his *Apostles*; and therefore when once it's made appear to us that *Christ* or his *Apostles* taught so and so, that is sufficient to command our Assent and Submission, Whether it be made appear from *Scripture* or *Tradition*. So that the Reason why we embrace some Doctrines and reject others, is not merely because the one are written, and the other not; but because to us, who live at so great a Distance from *Christ* and his *Apostles*,

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it can never be made so evident, that what is not *written* was taught by them, as what is. What is *written* hath been delivered down to us by the *unanimous Tradition* and Testimony of the *Church of Christ* in all Ages, which I am sure can never be justly pretended of any one of those *unwritten Traditions* which the *Church of Rome* now imposes upon the Faith of *Christians*. Let them but produce the same *unanimous* Testimony that any one of those *Twelve Articles* which they have thought meet to superadd to the *ancient Creeds*, was taught by *Christ* or his *Apostles*, as we do that what is contained in *Scripture* was so, and we will as readily embrace it as any Proposition in *Scripture*; but if *this Article* be neither to be found in *Scripture*, nor delivered down to us as taught by *Christ* or his *Apostles*, by the *unanimous* Testimony of the *Church of Christ* through all Ages, we must crave their pardon if we cannot receive it as Part of the *Word of God*. But how *impossible* it is to prove by the *unanimous* Testimony of the *Church*, that any *unwritten Doctrine* is Part of the *Word of God* necessary to be believed by all *Christians*, is evident from hence, because for *several* Ages after our *Saviour* the *Church* unanimously taught, That whatsoever was *necessary* to be believed was contained in *Scripture*; and for the same *Church* at the same time to testify that *this or that unwritten Doctrine* is a Part of God's *Word* necessary to be believed, and yet that all *Doctrines* necessary to be believed are *written*, is plainly to contradict it self. And yet we find the *Primitive Fathers* unanimously attesting that the *Scripture* is the Rule from whence we draw all the Assertions of our Faith, the *last Will* and Testimony of our *Saviour* by which all *Controversies* are to be decided, the *Boundaries* of the *Church*, out of which it is not to depart, the *Touchstone* of Truth, the *Foundation* and *Pillar* of our Faith for the Time to come, and the only certain Principle of *Christian Doctrine* and Demonstration in Matters of Faith. These are their *own* Expressions, and abundance more than these we meet with to the same purpose; and which is very observable, they not only assert the *Scripture* to be a full and adequate Rule of Faith, but severely declaim against all Additions to it. Thus *Eusebius Pamphilus* in the Name of the *Fathers* of the *Council of Nice*; *τις γραμμένων πιστεύει; τὰ μὴ γραμμένα μὴ ἐν νῦν μὴ ἐν τότε*; i. e. *those Things which are written, believe; those Things which are not written, neither think upon, nor enquire after*. Thus also *St. Austin*, *Quicquid inde audieritis Scriptura sacra, hoc vobis bene sapiat; quicquid extra est, respuite, ne erretis in nebula: Whatsoever ye hear from the Holy Scriptures let it savour well with you; whatsoever is without them, refuse, lest ye wander in a Cloud*. *St. Basil* declares, That it is a manifest falling from the Faith, and an Argument of *Arrogancy* either to reject any point of those Things that are written, or to bring in any of those which are not written; and that it is the Property of a faithful Man to be fully perswaded of the Truth of those Things that are delivered in the Holy Scripture, and not to dare either to reject or to add any thing thereunto. Thus *Tertullian* advers. *Hermog.* *Si enim non est scriptum, timeat Vae illud adjicientibus aut detrahentibus destinatum: If what he pretends be not written, let him fear that Woe that is denounced against such as add or take away*. What Likelihood therefore is there that they who thus severely forbid adding any thing to the written *Word of God*, did ever so much as dream of another *Word of God* consisting of *unwritten Traditions*? And indeed methinks it is very strange if there had been any other *Word of God* besides what is *written*, there should no notice be taken of it in that which is *written*; especially considering that if it be as *necessary* to be believed as the *Roman Church* defines it; it is as *necessary* that we should have Direction where to find it, and how to know it when we have it; but of this we have not the least Intimation in *Scripture*. For as for those Words of *St. Paul*, *2 Thess. 2. 15. Hold the Traditions which ye have been taught, whether by Word, or our Epistle*, all that can be justly inferred from them is only this, that the *Thessalonians* at the Writing of this Epistle had only an *Oral Tradition* of a great Part of that Gospel which *St. Paul* had preached to them, the Gospels being as yet either not collected into Writing, or not dispersed abroad into the Churches; so that then *this*, and his former Epistle to them, were perhaps the only *written Part* of the *New Testament* that

that was yet arrived to their Hands; and if so, then this Command of *holding the Traditions by Word*, did oblige no longer than till they had received the *written Gospel*; because then those *Traditions by Word* were all recorded in *Scripture*, and being there recorded, they were thenceforth obliged to hold them as *Scripture*, and no longer as *Traditions by Word*. But supposing there are still *unwritten Traditions* in the Church that are not in *Scripture*, but yet were delivered by *Christ* or his *Apostles*, and so are equally the *Word of God* with the *Scripture*; I would fain know how we who live at so great a Distance from *Christ* and his *Apostles*, should either know where to find, or be assured that they are such when we have them. We know very well that even in the *Primitive Ages* there were sundry counterfeit *Traditions* which *Hereticks* pretended to derive from *Christ* and his *Apostles*; and if it were so easy a matter to counterfeit *Traditions* then, how much more easy is it now? I confess *Vincentius Lirinensis* gives us a very good Rule how to distinguish counterfeit from true *Traditions*; *Quod ubiq; quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est, hoc est vere propriè; Catholicum*; That which was every where, and always, and by all *Christians* believed, that is truly and properly *Catholic*. And by this Rule we are willing to abide; if they can shew us any Article of *Christianity* not recorded in *Scripture*, which hath been every where, and always believed by all *Christians*, we will readily admit it as an *unwritten Word of God*, and with the same Respect and Reverence as we do that which is *written*? But this we are fully assured they will never be able to perform, seeing, as was shewn before, the *Primitive Church* doth with one Consent attest the *Scripture* to be an entire Rule of Faith, in which all the Articles of *Christianity* are contained.

But we are told that for these *unwritten Traditions* we must rely upon the *present Church* of every Age, and receive as a *divine Tradition* whatsoever she defines to be so; where by the *present Church* is meant the *present Roman Church*; that is to say, whatsoever *this Church* defines we must believe it, because she defines it; which we cannot but think is a *hard Case*; *First*, Because we know very well that the *Roman Church* is at best but a Part of the *Church universal*, and we know no Right that any Part hath to impose upon the *Whole*, and to oblige it to believe whatsoever she proposes, merely because she proposes it. *Secondly*, Because in Fact we are very well assured that the *Roman Church* is so far from being a sincere Preserver of *Tradition*, that there is no *Church* in the World hath more studiously attempted to counterfeit and deprave it; of which *innumerable* Instances are given by our Authors, many of which are now acknowledged even by their Authors to be *true*. For even their *Vulgar Latin Edition* of the *Bible* it self, which they prefer before the *Originals*, is confessed by themselves to abound with *manifest* Errors and Corruptions; and even to the very *Canon* of the *Bible* they have added *sundry Apochryphal Books* which we certainly know the *Primitive Tradition* never admitted as Parts of the *sacred Scripture*; and it is notorious to all the World how many Books and Writings they have forged, and how many of the Writings of the *Ancients* they have gelded and interpolated to defend and support those *pretended Traditions* which they have imposed upon the World as Articles of Faith. And after she hath been guilty of so many *apparent* Falsifications, we cannot but think it a very *hard Case* that we should still be obliged to believe her upon her own bare Word. For in the *third* Place, at this rate of Proceeding we must in many Instances condemn the *Traditions* of the *Primitive Church* in Complement to those of the *present Roman*; which if we believe our own Eyes, and the most *authentick* Histories and Records of those Times, do expressly thwart and contradict one another; and since, if we would never so fain we can never believe both Parts of a Contradiction, we must in believing the one give the Lye to the other. Nay, *Fourthly* and Lastly, though we should be persuaded, as we think we have Reason to be, that many of the *Traditions* of the *present Church of Rome* are not only not mentioned in *Scripture*, but directly contrary to it; (as for Instance, their performing *Divine Service* in an *unknown* Tongue, which we think is as contrary to 1 Cor. 14. as one Proposition can be to another :) yet if that *Churches* Definitions do by their own Authority oblige our Faith,

Faith, we must believe her against *Scripture* it self. And this we think *intolerable*, that any *Church* or *Christian* should be obliged to believe the *unwritten Word* of the *Church of Rome* in a Matter wherein, upon the most *diligent* and *impartial* Search, they are verily perswaded it contradicts the *written Word of God*; and if the Sentence of the *one* or *t'other* must be made *void*, we think it is very *reasonable* that the Voice of her *pretended unwritten Word* should be silenced by that more *certain* one of the *lively Oracles of God*. But after all, if what I have endeavoured to prove be proved, *viz.* that the *Holy Scriptures* are a *sufficient* Rule of Faith and Manners to conduct us to *eternal Life*, this will be enough to evacuate all that is pretended for this *unwritten Word of God*. For *God* and *Nature* we know do nothing in vain; and therefore if *one Word of God* be *sufficient*, *viz.* that which is *written*, what need have we of this *other* which is *unwritten*? And so I have done with the *first necessary* Property of a Rule of Faith, *viz.* that it be *full*; and shewn at large that the *Holy Scripture* is so as to all Things *necessary* to Salvation; and therefore shall now proceed to

II. The Second *viz.* That it be *clear* and *intelligible* to those whose Faith and Manners, are to be regulated by it.

I do not mean when I say that the *Scripture* is *clear*, and *plain*, and *intelligible* to all those to whom it is a Rule of Faith and Manners, that it is throughout so in all its Proposals. For it cannot be denied but there are many Things not only in *St. Paul's Epistles*, but also in *other Parts of Scripture*, *hard to be understood*; and such as do not only exceed the Apprehension of *common Capacities*; but also puzzle the Understandings of the most *acute* and *profound* Enquirers. But that which I assert is this, That all those *Doctrines of Faith*, and *Rules of Manners* which are *necessary* for Men to believe and practise in order to their Attainment of *eternal Life*, are so plainly and clearly revealed in *Scripture*, that there is no *honest teachable* Mind that is *capable* of understanding *common* Sense, but may from thence receive *full* Information of them upon *faithful* and *diligent* Enquiry. And tho' in *some* Texts these *Necessaries* are not so plainly proposed as in *others*, yet in *some* Text or *other* they are all of them so plainly proposed that no Man can read the *Scripture*, and still be *ignorant* of them, without being wilfully *blind*; for which there is no Remedy either *in* the *Scripture*, or *out* of it. And this I shall endeavour to prove,

1. From the *express* Testimony of *Scripture*.
2. From the *avowed* Design of writing the *Scripture*.
3. From the *frequent* Commands *God* lays upon us to read the *Scripture*.
4. From the Obligation that lies upon us under Pain of Damnation to believe, and receive all those *Necessaries* to Salvation contained in it.

I. From the *express* Testimony of *Scripture* it is evident, that in all Things *necessary* to Salvation at least, the *Scripture* is *clear* and *plain*. For to be sure if in any thing the *Scripture* be *plain*, it is in those Things that are most *necessary* to be believed and known; and therefore if it be *obscure* in these Things, we may reasonably presume it is *plain* in nothing: But that it is in many Things plain and easy to be understood, is evident from its *own* Testimony: For thus of the *Mosaick Law* it is expressly affirmed by *Moses*, *This Commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hid from thee, neither is it far off*, *Deut. 30. 11*. Where *Moses* speaks not only of the *Ten Commandments*, which consisting for the most part of *Laws of Nature*, are upon that Account more *easy* to be understood; but of all the *Commandments of Moses* in general, whether *Ceremonial*, *Judicial*, or *Natural*. For so, *v. 16*. *This Commandment*, we find, contains as well the *Statutes and Judgments*, as the *Commandments of the Law*, all which must take in the whole *Mosaick Institution*. And accordingly, *Psal. 119. 105*. *David* calls this *Word of God*, *a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path*; Which how could it be if it did not burn *clear* enough to guide and direct him? And if it did, then to be sure it burnt *clear* enough to direct him in those Things wherein

wherein it was most *necessary* for him to be directed. Again, in the 19th *Psalms*, ver. 7, 8. we are told, that *the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple*; and that *the Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the eyes*. But how can any Law make the *simple wise*, or enlighten the Eyes of Men, unless it be so plainly and clearly delivered as that the *simple* may be capable of apprehending, and the Eyes of Men of discerning the Sense of it? I know it is objected by *Bellarmin*, that these Words do only imply that this Law indeed being understood, doth enlighten Mens Eyes, and direct their Practice; but by no means that it is *plain* and *easy* to be understood. But this is a *meer* Cavil; for it's plain that it is by understanding the Law, that the *simple* are made *wise*, and the Eyes of Men enlightned. If therefore this Law be so *obscure* in its self as that it cannot make it self understood by all that sincerely inquire into it, how is it *possible* that it should make them *wise*, or enlighten the Eyes of their Minds? But it's plain that the Intent of those Passages of *David* was to excite, and encourage Men to study and observe the Law: But what though the Law makes the *simple* wise, when they understand it; what Encouragement is this for the *simple* to study it, if it be so *obscure* that they cannot understand it? And since they must understand it before they can observe it, what Encouragement doth this Consideration give them to observe it, that it will make them *wise* when they understand it, if it be not plain enough for them to understand it? But then that forecited Passage of *Moses* doth in *express* Words contradict this Cavil of *Bellarmin*; for he tells the People that *the Commandment he gave them was not hidden from them*; whereas if it had been so obscurely delivered to them by *Moses*, that upon their *sincere* and *diligent* Enquiry they could not understand it, it is certain that it had been still hidden from them, how *wise* soever it might make them when they did understand it: And to say that such a Proposition will make me *wise* when I do understand it, is no Argument at all that it is not hidden from me, if it be so obscurely expressed, as that upon my *sincere* Enquiry I am not capable of understanding it. But that the *Old Testament* at least in all *necessary* Matters was *plain* enough even to *common* Capacities, is evident from the *frequent* Appeals our *Saviour* makes to it in his Contests with the *Common People* of the *Jews*. Thus in the Text he bids them, *Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me*; and in other Places, *What saith the Scripture?* And doth not the Scripture say so and so? Now how *impertinent* would it have been for our *Saviour* thus to appeal to it at the Tribunal of the People, if he thought it so *obscure* that the People were not *capable* of understanding it? How *trifling* would it be for a Man to appeal to *Suarez's Metaphysicks* in a Controversy with a *Plow-man*, or to refer him to *Euclid's Elements* for the determining the Bounds and Measures of a Field?

And as from what hath been said, 'tis apparent that the *Scriptures* of the *Old Testament* were at least in all *Necessaries* *plain* and *clear* to the *Jews*; so it is no less evident that the *Scriptures* of the *New Testament* are so to *Christians*, since it gives the same Testimony to it self of its own Clearness, as the *Old Testament* doth. For thus, 2 Cor. 4. 2, 3, 4. the Apostle tells us, that they did not *handle the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the Truth, commending themselves to Mens Consciences in the sight of God*. But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them. Supposing then that they wrote with the same Plainness and Clearness with which they spake, (which there is no shadow of Reason to doubt of) then from these Words it is evident; *First*, That they did neither in their Preaching nor Writings affect to discourse dubiously or obscurely, but that their great Design was so to manifest and make known the Truth as that by their Plainness and Simplicity they might recommend themselves to the Consciences of all that heard or read them. *Secondly*, That in Fact they had in their Sermons and Writings so clearly taught the Gospel, that if after all it remained *hidden* or *obscure* to any, it was only to such as were *lost* and *irrecoverable*. *Thirdly*,

ly, That *that* which render'd the Gospel which they had taught and written, *hid-*
den or *obscure* to such, was not the Obscurity either of the Matter which they
 taught, or of their Manner of Teaching it, but their own *worldly* Affections
 which blinded their Eyes, and hindred them from seeing that which in its self
 was illustriously *visible*. Which is an *unanswerable* Evidence of the Clearness and
 Plainness of the Scriptures of the *New Testament* in all *necessary* Things ; for if
 they are *clear* to all but such as wilfully shut their Eyes against them, they are
 as *clear* as they need be to *honest* and *teachable* Minds ; for there is nothing can
 be clear enough to such as are not willing to understand. And accordingly the
 Gospel, which the Apostle calls *the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation*, is said
 to have *appeared*, or shone forth, *to all Men* ; *teaching us, that denying Ungodliness*
and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World,
Tit. 2. 11. Now if the Gospel did shine forth unto all Men, it must be in the
Sermons and *Discourses* of those that had preached it to the World ; and if they so
 preached it as that it shone forth to all Men, they must necessarily have preach-
 ed it very plainly and clearly : Either therefore it was wrote as it was preached,
 or it was not ; if it was not, it was not wrote truly and sincerely ; if it was, it
 was wrote very plainly, so as to make it appear and shine forth to all that read
 it. 'Tis true, there are some Things *obscure* both in the *Old Scriptures* and *New* ;
 but then these are such Things as are no Parts of the *Necessaries* and *Essentials* of
Religion ; such Things as Men may be safely ignorant of, or be *mistaken* about,
 without any hazard of their *eternal* Life. For all that the *forecited* Testimonies
 prove is only this, that *that true Religion* by which God governs the Faith and
 Manners of Men, is so far forth as it is *necessary* to be believed and practised,
 plainly and clearly revealed to them in the *Holy Scriptures*. But besides this, all
 Men agree there are a *great many other* Things revealed in *Holy Scripture*, which,
 because they are not *necessary* for all Men to understand, are many of them not
 so plainly revealed as that all Men may understand them. But since the *Scripture*
 was written to teach and instruct Men, to be sure it teaches them most plainly
 that which is most *necessary* for them to know ; and therefore since there are
 some Things plainly taught in *Scripture*, as is evident to any one that reads it, to
 be sure among these Things are contained all that is *necessary* for Men to know
 and understand.

2. From the *avowed* Design of writing the *Scripture* it is also evident, that in
 all Things *necessary* it is *plain* and *clear*. For thus concerning the *Old Testament*,
 St. Paul tells us, that *whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for*
our learning ; that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope,
Rom. 15. 4. And if they were written for our Learning and Instruction, to be
 sure they were so written as to teach and instruct us, that is, plainly and clearly,
 especially as to those Things wherein we have most need to be instructed. And
 then as for the *New Testament*, St. Luke tells his *Theophilus*, that the Reason of
 his writing his Gospel, was that he might know the certainty of those things that
 were surely believed among *Christians*, and wherein he himself had been instruct-
 ed ; And if it were to ascertain us of the Principles of *Christianity* that he wrote
 his Gospel, certainly he would take care to write it after such a Manner as that
 those that read it might understand it, otherwise he must run counter to his
own Design. Thus also St. John saith, that he wrote his Gospel that Men might
believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God ; But how could his Gospel induce
 Men to believe this, unless it be so *written* as that Men may understand it ? And
 so also for his Epistles he tells us, that he wrought them that *they that believed*
in Jesus, might know that they have eternal Life, and that they may believe, or
continue to believe, on the name of the Son of God : And if this were his End, to
 be sure he would take care to write so as that they might understand ; otherwise
 how could they know by his Writing that they had *eternal Life*, or be moved
 thereby to continue to believe on the Name of Jesus ? For there is nothing can
 create in Men either Knowledge or Faith, but what they understand. Seeing
 therefore the *great* End of Writing the *Scripture* was to instruct the World in the
 great

great Things of Religion, either we must say that both the Writers of the *Scripture*, and the *Holy Ghost* that inspired them were *defective* in Skill, or in Care so to write as to obtain this End; or that their Writings are an *effectual* Means to obtain it, which it is *impossible* for them to be, unless they are *plain* and *clear* as to the great Things of Religion. In short, every *wise* Agent pursues his End by the most *proper* and *effectual* Means; and I would fain know whether to write plainly or obscurely be the most *proper* Means to instruct Men by Writing; if to write plainly, then either the *Apostles* wrote so, or they were not *wise* Agents, since to instruct was the great End of their Writing. The most *natural* Way of conveying to Mens Minds the Notices of Things is by Words either *spoken* or *written*, and seeing whatsoever can be *spoken* in plain and *intelligible* Words may be *written* in the same Words, there can be no doubt but those Words will be as *intelligible* when they are *written*, as when they are *spoken*; For why should the same Words be more *obscure* when conveyed to us by our Eyes, than when conveyed to us by our Ears? Seeing then the Sense of *Scripture* may be as plainly conveyed by Words *written* as by Words *spoken*, and seeing that even those who deny the Plainness of *Scripture* do yet allow that the Sense of it may be plainly conveyed by Words *spoken*, or which is the same thing, *Oral Tradition*; if the *Scripture* be not *plain* it can be resolved into no other Reason but this, that God would not have it so; for there is no doubt but he could have *spoken* as plainly as Men, and have *written* as plainly as he spoke; and therefore if he hath not done so, it was because he would not; but to say that he would not write those Things plainly which he thought *necessary* for all Men to know, and which he wrote on purpose that all Men might know, is to say that he would, and would not at the same time; or that he wrote them on purpose that Men might know them, and yet that he wrote so as that they might not know them.

3. From the *frequent* Commands God lays upon us to read the *Scripture* it is also evident, that in all *necessary* Things it is *plain* and *clear*. That God doth not only allow, but will and require us to read the *Scripture*, I shall shew at large hereafter, when I come to treat of *searching the Scripture*. Supposing therefore at present the Thing to be *true*, I would fain know to what purpose should God require us to read the *Scripture*, if in those things which are *necessary* for Men to know and believe, it be not *plain* and *intelligible*. Doth God require us to read it, for the sake of reading it, or for the sake of understanding it? If the *former*, reading any other Book might as well have answered God's End as reading the *Scripture*; because reading is reading whatsoever it be that we read; if the *later*, then either the *Scripture* is *plain* and *intelligible* as to all those Things which he requires us to understand, or he requires us to read it in vain. For to what Purpose should we read that we may understand, if that which we are to read be not *plain* enough to be understood by us? As for Instance; the *Bereans*, *Acts* 17. 11. are highly commended for *searching the Scriptures daily*; now I would fain know was this a Virtue in them, or was it not? If not, why are they commended for it; if it were, it was certainly their Duty. What was the Intendment of it; was it only that they might be expert Readers? Why are they so commended for reading the *Scriptures* above any other Book, seeing that reading any other Book would have done as well for that Purpose as reading the *Scriptures*? But the Text it self tells us that the Intendment of their reading the *Scripture* was, that they might know whether those things were so or no, which St. Paul had preached to them; But how should they know this by reading the *Scripture*, if the *Scripture* which they read were not *plain* enough to be understood by them? Again, St. Paul gives this as a great Commendation of his Son *Timothy*, that from a Child he had known the *Holy Scriptures*; whence by the way we may learn, that it is not so great a Reproach to our Church as the *Romanists* intend it for, that we permit Women and Children, Tinkers and Cobblers to read the *Scripture*. But I pray, what was the Meaning of *Timothy's* knowing the *Holy Scripture* from a Child? Was it that he knew the Words of it only, or the Sense of it also? If the *former*, a Parrot may be taught as much as *Timothy* had learned, and consequently de-

serve as *high* a Commendation as he ; if the *later*, then it seems the *Scripture* is plain enough for a well-disposed Child to know the Sense of it, so far forth at least as it is *necessary* to be known ; and this is as much as we desire. If therefore God requires us to read the *Scripture*, as *Timothy* did, to the End that we may know and understand it as he did, then either we may understand the Sense of it by reading it, or else God requires us to read it in vain.

4. And lastly, From the Obligation we lie under upon pain of Damnation to believe and receive those *Necessaries* to Salvation contained in *Scripture*, it is also evident, that as to all those *Necessaries* it is plain and clear. That we are obliged to believe under pain of Damnation all that the *Scripture* proposes as *necessary* to our Salvation, is agreed on all hands ; But how can Men be justly obliged to believe such Things as are *obscure*, and *doubtful*, and *uncertain*, and of which they can have no *certain* Knowledge ? Either the *Necessaries* to Salvation must be plainly and clearly express'd in *Scripture*, or we have not *sufficient* Reason to believe them ; and to say God will damn us for not believing those Things which he hath not given us *sufficient* Reason to believe, is to charge him with the most *outrageous* Oppression and Injustice. But we are told, that tho' God hath not clearly revealed to us in *Scripture* those Things which he hath obliged us to believe upon Pain of Damnation, yet he hath left us *sufficient* Reason to believe them ; for he hath left us to the Conduct of an *infallible Church*, that is to say, of the *present Church of Rome* in all Ages, whom he hath *authorized* to explain and define to us all Things that are *necessary* to be believed, which we are to receive upon her Authority, and not upon the *Scriptures* ; so that if we firmly believe what She defines and proposes to us, we are sure to believe all Things that are *necessary* to be believed. Now in Answer to this Objection, which indeed is the great Foundation that the Faith of those of the *present Church of Rome* relies on, I desire these Things may be seriously considered :

1. That before we can reasonably rely upon the Authority of the *present Church of Rome*, in defining and proposing to us the Articles of our Faith, there are *sundry* Things that we must believe upon the Authority of *Scripture*.

2. That these Things which we must believe from *Scripture* before we can rely upon the Authority of *that Church*, are at least as obscurely revealed in *Scripture* as any other Article of our *Christian* Faith.

3. That after all these Things, upon our relying on that *Church's* Authority, we are left to the *same* or *greater* Uncertainties than upon our relying upon the Authority of *Scripture*.

4. That in relying upon the Authority of the *Scripture* we are left to no other Uncertainties than just what is *necessary* to render our Faith *virtuous* and *rewardable* ; whereas by relying upon the Authority of *that Church*, supposing it to be a *certain* Ground, as it is pretended, our Faith would have *little* or *nothing* of *Virtue* in it.

1. That before we can reasonably rely upon the Authority of *that Church*, in defining and proposing to us the Articles of our Faith, there are *sundry* Things that we must believe upon the Authority of *Scripture*. As for Instance ; we must in the *first* Place believe that there is a *Church*, or Society of *Christians* separated from the World, or incorporated by a *peculiar Divine* Charter. Now whether there be such a *Church* or no, is a Question that must be resolved by the *Scripture*, and not by the *Church* ; because to believe that there is a *Church* because the *Church* saith there is a *Church*, is to take that for granted which is the Thing in Question. Secondly, We must believe that this *Church* hath Authority to define and propose to us the Articles of our Faith, which must also for the same Reason be believed on the Authority of the *Scripture*, and not of the *Church*. For to believe that there is a *Church* that hath Authority to propose to us the Articles of our Faith, is to believe that there is a *Church* which we are obliged to believe ; And how can I believe this upon the *Church's* Authority, unless I can believe

believe it before I do believe it? *Thirdly*, Before we can rely upon this Church's Authority in defining and proposing to us the Articles of our Faith, we must believe that this Church is *infallible*; for if she be not *infallible*, how is it *consistent* with the Truth of God to oblige us to believe Her, seeing in so doing he must oblige us whensoever She errs to believe her Errors? But that she is *infallible* is not to be believed upon her *own* Authority; for then her *infallible* Authority must be the Reason of our Belief that She is *infallible*, that is, we must believe her *infallible*, because we believe her *infallible*. Seeing then we cannot believe it on her *own* Authority, if we believe it at all, it must be upon the Authority of *Scripture*. *Fourthly*, Before we can rely upon the Church of Rome's Authority to define to us the Articles of our Faith, we must believe the Church of Rome to be this *infallible* Church: But seeing this is no *self-evident* Principle, we must have some *other* Evidence besides her self to induce us to believe it; and what else can that be but *Scripture*? We are told indeed by some of her *greatest Divines*, that there are *certain* Marks and Notes of a *true Church* peculiar to the Church of Rome, by which we are obliged to believe Her the *true Church*; such as *Antiquity, Universality, Holiness of Doctrine, &c.* But seeing no Doctrine can be *holy* that is not *true*, we must be satisfied that *that Church* is *true* before we can know that it is *holy*; so that before we can reasonably submit to her Authority, we must be very well assured that her Doctrine is *true*, and this we cannot be assured of by her Authority, because that as yet is the Matter in Question; and therefore we can be no otherwise assured of it, but only by the Authority of *Scripture*; and when we are assured before hand by the Authority of *Scripture* that her Doctrines are *true*, her Authority comes *too* late to assure us. Seeing therefore it is evident that there are some, if not all the Articles of the *Roman Faith* that must be known and believed by us upon the Authority of *Scripture* before we can safely rely upon her Authority to define them to us, how can we be obliged to settle our Faith upon her Authority, when as before we can reasonably admit her Authority, we must believe several of the Articles of our Faith upon the Authority of *Scripture*? For I would fain know, are these Articles of Faith, or no? *That there is a Church; that this Church hath Authority to define the Articles of our Faith, and that in so defining, this Church is infallible, and that this infallible Church is the Church of Rome?* If they be, as they themselves own they are, then there are some Articles it seems that must be believed without the Church's Authority upon the *single* Authority of *Scripture*; and if *some*, why not *all*? Why should not the *Scripture* be as *sufficient* to authorize us to believe the Rest as these, since its Authority is as *great* in *one* Text as in *another*? Especially considering,

2. That these things which we must believe from *Scripture* before we can rely upon the Authority of the Church of Rome, are at least as obscurely revealed in *Scripture* as any *other* Article of our *Christian* Faith. The *great* Reason urged by the *Romanists* against our Relyance upon the *Scripture* for our Faith is the Obscurity of it; and if this be a *good* Reason it proves a *great* deal more than they would have it, *viz.* that we ought not to rely upon *Scripture* even for those Articles, without believing of which we can have no *sufficient* Ground to rely upon the Authority of their Church. For I would fain know, is it *clear* and *plain* from *Scripture* that the *present Catholick Church* of every Age hath Authority to define the Articles of Faith, and that in all its Definitions it is *infallible*? and that the *present Church of Rome* is this *Catholick Church*? If so; how come those Texts upon which those Articles are founded to be understood in a quite *different* Sense, not only by us, but by the *greatest* part of the *Primitive Fathers*, as hath been abundantly proved by *Protestant* Writers? Supposing that we should be so *blinded* by our Partiality to our *own* Tenets as to misapprehend *plain* and *clear* Expressions of *Scripture*, it is very *strange* methinks that the *Fathers* who were never engaged in the Controversy, and so could not be biased either *one* way or *another*, should yet misapprehend them too. What is this but to say that let Men be never so *indifferent*, yet they may be easily mistaken in the Sense of very *plain* and *clear* Expressions; and if so, What signifies either

Speaking

Speaking or Writing? But to proceed to some Instances; will any *modest* Man in the World affirm that the *Church of Rome's Infallibility* in defining Articles of Faith to all *succeeding* Generations is more plainly express'd in those Words of our *Saviour, Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church*, than the *Divinity* of our *Saviour* is in the Beginning of the *first* Chapter of *St. John's Gospel*, where it is expressly affirmed that he is *God*, whereas in the *other* there is not the least mention either of the *Church of Rome*, or of *Infallibility*, or defining Articles of Faith? Why may we not then as well depend upon the *one* Text for the Article of our *Saviour's Divinity*, as upon the *other* for that of the *Church of Rome's Infallibility*? Again, are there not *innumerable* Texts of Scripture wherein the Articles of *Remission of Sin, the Resurrection of the Dead, the last Judgment, and the World to come* are at least as plainly express'd as the *present Church of Rome's Infallibility* is in any of those Texts that are urged in the Defence of it? And therefore if we believe the *latter* upon the Authority of *Scripture* notwithstanding the pretended Obscurity of it, why may we not as well upon the same Authority believe all the *former*, since the *former* are at least as plainly express'd as the *latter*? Either therefore the *Scripture* is *plain* enough to be rely'd upon as to *this* Article of the *Church of Rome's Infallibility*, or it is not; if it be not, we have no Ground for our Dependence upon the Authority of her Definitions and Proposals; if it be, it's *plain* enough to be rely'd upon in all other *necessary* Articles of Faith, since these are all as plainly at least express'd in *Scripture* as that. For if we may not rely upon *Scripture* because it is not *plain*, then where it is equally *plain*, it is equally to be rely'd on.

3. That when we come to rely upon this *Church's* Authority, we are expos'd to far *greater* Uncertainties than while we rely'd upon the Authority of *Scripture*. For in the *first* Place, we are of all sides agreed that the *Scripture* is *Infallible*, and that *such* and *such* Writings are Parts of *Scripture*; and therefore are absolutely *secure* that if we follow the *true* Sense of it, it cannot mislead us. But the much *greater* Part of *Christians* deny that the *Church of Rome* is *Infallible*; even the *Church of Rome* it self owns the Authority we rely on to be *infallible*, but all *Christians* all the World over, besides those of her *own* Communion, disallow *hers* to be so; and to forsake our Dependence upon an *Infallibility* which *all* own, to rely upon an *Infallibility* which but *few* in Comparison admit, is certainly a very *dangerous* Venture. And then *Secondly*, As for the *Infallibility* of *Scripture* we are *certain* where to find it; *viz.* in every Text, and in every Proposition therein contained, which being all the *Word of God*, must be all *infallible*. But as for the *Infallibility* of the *Roman Church*, as they have handled the Matter, it is almost as *difficult* to find as to prove it; some cry, lo it is here; and some, lo it is there; some place it in the *Pope* only, others in the *Pope* and his *College of Cardinals*; some in the *Pope* presiding in a *General Council*, others in a *General Council* whether the *Pope* preside in it, or no. So that in this *Church*, it seems, there is *Infallibility* somewhere, but what are we the better for it if we know not where to find it? If we go to the *Pope* for it; there have been *two* or *three* *Popes* at once that have decreed against *one another*; and therefore *one* or *t'other* of them to be sure were mistaken. How then shall we know which is the *true* *infallible* one? And when I have found the *true Pope*, others tell me I am not yet arrived at the Seat of *Infallibility* until I have found him in his *College of Cardinals*; and when I have found him here I am still to seek, seeing I find the same *Pope* (*Eugenius the Fourth* for Instance) decreeing *one* Thing in his *College of Cardinals*, and the quite *contrary* in a *General Council*; and therefore I am sure he could not be *infallible* in both. Therefore others send me to the *Pope* in a *General Council*; but when I come thither, I find my self at a *Loss* again; because I meet with several Instances of *one Pope's* defining *one* Thing in *one General Council*, and *another Pope*, the quite *contrary* in *another*; and therefore in *one* or *t'other* *Council* I am sure, the *one* or *t'other Pope* was mistaken. And as for *General Councils* themselves there are *sundry* of them which are owned by *some*, and rejected by *others* of the *principal* Doctors of the *Roman Communion*. And even when

when *Councils* are legally assembled, there are so many *nice* Disputes among them, what it is that makes them *General*, and when it is that they act *Conciliariter* as they call it, that is, so as to render their Decrees perpetually and universally obliging; that though we were resolved to build our Faith upon the Authority of *this Church*, yet if we will use that Caution in believing that we ought to do in a Matter of so great Moment, we should find our selves involved in greater Uncertainties concerning these Things than we are concerning the Sense even of the most *difficult* Places of *Scripture*. But then *Thirdly*, When we are pass'd over all these Difficulties we are still at as great a Loss to understand what is the Sense of the *Church* to be believed by us, as what is the Sense of *Scripture*. For the *Church* hath no *other* way to deliver her Sense to us but either by *Oral Tradition*, that is, by Word of Mouth; or by *Writing*; If She deliver her Sense to me by *Oral Tradition*, how can I know what that is who never heard Her speak either in its *diffused* Body, or in a *General Council*, or in any *other* Representative; unless it be that of my own *Parish Priest* perhaps, who for all I know may be *Ignorant* or *Heretical*, and so either not understand himself the *Church's Oral Tradition*, or wilfully pervert it to a *contrary* Meaning? And if the *Church* deliver her Sense to me by *Writing*, as She hath done in the *written* Decrees of her *General Councils*, must I read over all her Decrees? How should I do that who understand not so much as the Languages in which they are written? Or suppose they were translated, how shall I know that they are faithfully render'd, any more than I do that the *Scripture* is so? But suppose I were *certain* of this, and should thereupon proceed to read them, alas, I find in them a great many *difficult* and *dubious* Expressions, yea, and at least *seeming* Contradictions to *each other*; how then can I be more certain of the true Sense of these Writings than of the Sense of the Writings of *Scripture*? But you will say, the *Church* hath digested her Sense of all her Articles of Faith into a *plain Creed* and *Catechism*, viz. that of the *Council of Trent*, whereby the plainest Reader may without any *laborious* Enquiries be readily instructed what he ought to believe. This I confess is something; but as for those Articles of Faith wherein *We* and the *Church of Rome* are agreed, we find them as plainly express'd in *Scripture* as in that *Creed* and *Catechism*; and therefore we have Reason to believe that if those Articles wherein we disagree had ever been intended for Articles of Faith, they would have been as plainly express'd there as these; but 'tis no wonder we should not find them plainly express'd *there*, when we cannot find them express'd *there* at all. But do we not find that the *Scriptures* even in the *plainest* Expressions of Articles of Faith have yet been perverted by *Hereticks*, into a *contrary* Meaning? And what then? Are not the Words of *Councils* as liable to be perverted into a *contrary* Meaning as the Words of *Scripture*? For do not the *Roman* Doctors differ as much about the Sense of their *Councils*, as we do about the Sense of our *Scriptures*? Yea, and have we not a *notorious* Instance of it at this very Day? For what can be more *contrary* than *Bellarmino's* Exposition of the *Trent Faith*, and the *Bishop of Condom's*? And yet both allowed by the *Pope*, who by the Authority of that *Council* is made *sole* Arbitrator of the Sense of it. But then *Fourthly* and Lastly, As to the Sense of *Scripture* our Reliance on the Authority of that *Church* leaves us at as great an Uncertainty as it found us. For where the *Scripture* designs to speak plainly, as it doth in all Things *necessary* to Salvation, the *Church* cannot speak *plainer*; and therefore there we may understand the *Scripture* as well without the *Church* as with it; but where it doth not speak plainly, the *Church of Rome* hath left us no *infallible* Commentary whereby to understand it; so that where the *Scripture* is *plain* She hath not made it *plainer*, and where it is *obscure* She hath left it as *obscure* as ever: So that after all the Noise that is made of *Infallibility* her Doctors are fain to apply themselves to the same Methods of Understanding *Scripture*, that is, to consult the Sense of *Antiquity*, and compare Text with Text, and the like that we *fallible* Protestants do; and when they have done all, are as *liable* to be mistaken as we. Nay, they themselves confess that even *General Councils* themselves may be mistaken in their

Applications

Applications of *Scripture*; that is, that they may misapply them to *wrong* Purposes, which they cannot do without mistaking the Sense of them, of which there are a *great* many *notorious* Instances in the *second Council of Nice*; which to prove it the Duty of *Christians* to worship *Images*, urges God's taking Clay, and making Man after his *own* Image; and likewise that of *Esay*, *There shall be a Sign and Testimony to the Lord in the Land of Egypt*; and also those Passages of *David*, *Confession and Beauty is before him. Lord I have loved the Beauty of thy House. O Lord my Face hath sought for thee. O Lord I will seek after thy Countenance. O Lord, the Light of thy Countenance is sealed over us.* And from that Passage, *As we have seen, so have we heard*, they argue that there must be Images to look on; and because it is said, *God is marvellous in his Saints*, they conclude that the *Church* must be deck'd with Pictures: And from, *No man lighteth a Candle and putteth it under a Bushel*, they wisely infer that *Images* must be set upon the Altar; all which are as *remote* from their Sense as the *first* Verse of the *first* Chapter of *Genesis*. What *greater* Certainty have they with their *Infallibility* than we without it? We can know as well the Sense of *plain* Texts of *Scripture*, as of *plain* Texts of *Councils*, or *Creeds*, or *Catechisms*; and we can as easily pervert the Sense of the *one* as of the *other*: And as for those that are not *plain*, even *General Councils* you see, for all their *Infallibility*, may be mistaken about them as well as we. So that when all comes to all, by forsaking the *infallible* Authority of *Scripture* to rely upon the *infallible* Authority of *that Church*, we are so far from arriving at a *greater* Certainty of Faith that we are involved in *greater* Uncertainties than ever. But then,

4. And Lastly, In relying upon the Authority of *Scripture* we are left to no *other* Uncertainties than just what are *necessary* to render our Faith *virtuous* and *rewardable*; whereas by relying upon the Authority of the *Church of Rome* (supposing it were as *sure* a Ground of Faith as it is pretended) our Faith would have *little* or *nothing* of Virtue in it. It is pretended (though *falsely* you see) that *that Church's* Authority is so *sure* a Ground of Faith, that while a Man depends upon it he cannot be mistaken in any *necessary* Article of Faith; which in Reality amounts to no more than this, That while a Man believes as *that Church* believes, which *Infallibly* believes all that is *necessary* to Salvation, he *infallibly* believes all that is *necessary* to Salvation; and it is equally *true*, that while a Man believes as the *Scripture* teaches, which *infallibly* teaches all that is *necessary* to Salvation, he *infallibly* believes all that is *necessary* to Salvation; that is, both are equally *false*. For no Man can *infallibly* believe either the *Church* or *Scripture*, because *Infallibility* exceeds the Capacity of *humane* Nature; no Man can so believe *either* but that he may be mistaken, and if he may be mistaken, its *possible* he may not believe all that is *necessary* to Salvation, whether he grounds his Faith upon the *Church* or the *Scripture*. But because this *Church* pretends so to secure my Faith while I depend upon her Authority as that I cannot be mistaken, for this very Reason I cannot depend upon it, because I am sure of this, that *God* never designed for me any such Means of Believing as should render my Faith *infallible*. For to what End should he require me to take so much Pains and Care to secure my Faith from Errors, if he hath furnished me with any *certain* Means of being *infallible*? It would be but applying that Means whatever it is, and my Danger would be immediately over; and then I need trouble my Head no further, being now so *secured* as that I cannot be mistaken; after which it would be very *impertinent* methinks for *God* to trouble me with those *unnecessary* Injunctions of *trying* all Things, and holding fast to that which is good; of searching the *Scriptures*, and trying the *Spirits* whether they be of *God*; and taking heed whilst I stand lest I fall. What need a Man be at the Expence of all this Labour and Caution, whose Faith is already secured? Seeing therefore *God* requires these Things at our Hands, it is a *plain* Case that he never intended us any Method how to be *infallible* in believing; and therefore since the *Church of Rome's* Authority is pretended to be such a Method, for that Reason it ought to be rejected. It's plain that *God* intended that our Faith should be a Grace and a Virtue, and consequently that

that it should be an Act of our Wills as well as of our Understandings, which supposes the Evidence of it to be *irresistible*; for what Virtue is it to believe that the Sun shines when it glares full in our Eyes? Since therefore our Faith must be a *free* and *voluntary* Assent upon such Motives as are *sufficient* to satisfy an *honest* Mind, but not to compel either an *obstinate* Infidel or *self-deceived* Hypocrite; God did not think fit so to secure our Faith as to leave it *impossible* for us to err *damnably*; And, indeed if he had, it would have been no Virtue in us to believe *savingly*; for what Virtue is it for a Man to do that which it is *impossible* for him not to do? It is *sufficient* that we cannot err damnably in our Faith without some *damnable* Fault in our Wills; but if we either refuse to enquire into this Revelation for what is *necessary* for us to believe, or will only enquire into it with a Mind that is *bias'd* with *wicked* and *sinful* Prejudices, or will not submit our Understandings to it upon the *clearest* Conviction, there is no doubt but we may be *ignorant*, and we may be deceived in Things of the *greatest* Moment, and it is but *just* and *fit* that we should: And if notwithstanding these Faults we could not err, for God's sake what Virtue would it be to be *Orthodox*? But if with *honest*, *humble*, and *teachable* Minds we will diligently enquire into *divine* Revelation, we shall there find all the *Necessaries* to Salvation so clearly and plainly proposed to us, that 'twill be *morally impossible* for us either to be *ignorant* of, or deceived about them. So that by relying on *Scripture* you see we are exposed to no *other* Uncertainties than just what are *necessary* to render our Faith a Virtue; and God doth as much require that our Faith should be *virtuous* as that it should be *Orthodox*; that it should be the Act of an *honest*, *humble*, *diligent*, and *teachable* Mind, as that it should be extended to all Things *necessary* to Salvation. Now our Faith may be *Orthodox* without an *infallible* Certainty, but it cannot be *virtuous* and *rewardable* with it. To what purpose then do the *Romanists* talk of an *infallible* Certainty in Believing? Is it *reasonable* to expect more Certainty than God ever intended to give? He hath given as much as is *necessary* for *honest* Minds and no more, and whether *Knaves* and *Hypocrites* believe *right* or *wrong* is of no *great* Concernment. If therefore our Faith be *liable* to no *other* Uncertainty than just what is *necessary* to try our *Honesty*, that is much *better* for us in respect of the Virtue of our Faith than an *infallible* Certainty. Supposing therefore that the *Church of Rome* were as *infallible* as it pretends, it is certain that the *Scripture* is as *infallible* as that; but whether we rely upon *one* or *another* we are *fallible* still. And could that *Church* render us as *infallibly certain* as it pretends, it would thereby preserve indeed the *Orthodoxy* of our Faith, but then at the same Time it would destroy the Virtue of it: For to believe *right* when we cannot believe *wrong* is *fatal* and *necessary*; but to believe *right* when through *our own* Default we may believe *wrong*, this is *virtuous* and *rewardable*.

By what hath been said therefore, I think it is sufficiently evident, that it is upon the *Scripture* we are to rely, and not upon the *Church*, especially upon the *Roman Church*, for all Things *necessary* to Salvation; and therefore since we are obliged to believe these Things upon pain of *Eternal* Damnation, it necessarily follows that they must be *plain* and *clear*, and *Scripture*; otherwise we could not be justly so obliged to believe them. And thus I have shewn at large that the *Scripture* is the *great* Rule of our Faith and Manners, and that as such, it is both *full* and *clear*, as containing in it all Things *necessary* to Salvation, and proposing them so plainly and clearly, as that upon an *honest* and *diligent* Enquiry all Men may find and discover them.

DISCOURSE XXV.

UPON,

JOHN V. 39.

Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal Life.



Hether these Words are to be rendred *Indicatively*, [*Ye do search the Scriptures*] as some would have them, or *Imperatively*, [*Search the Scriptures*] as our Translation renders them, amounts to the same thing; For if we render them *Indicatively*, [*Ye do search the Scriptures*] it is evident, that they are spoken with Approbation, *Ye do read the Scriptures, and ye do very well in so doing*: For thus we find the *Bereans* commended for *searching the Scriptures*; and *Timothy*, for *knowing them from a Child*. And if to Search the Scripture be a commendable Practice, then to be sure our Saviour here mentions it at least with Approbation; and what he approves when done, that to be sure he would have us do. * Whether therefore it be delivered in the Form of a Command, or of a bare Assertion, it is *equivalent* to a Command, it being at least an Assertion of a Thing which he approves, and consequently would have all Men to Practise. But because there is a numerous Party in the *Christian World* which doth not only forbid the People to Search the *Scriptures*, but represents it as a Practice of very *dangerous* Consequence, it is hereby become *necessary* that we should not only assert, but prove their Obligation to it, which otherwise would be very *needless*, there being nothing more *plain* and *evident* in it self. Now to prove that the People are obliged to Search and Read the *Scriptures*, I shall as briefly as I can, argue the Point from these following Topicks.

1. From the Obligations which the *Jews* were under to Read and Search the *Scriptures* of the *Old Testament*.
2. From our Saviour's and his Apostles Approbation of their Practice in pursuance of this their Obligation.
3. From the great Design and Intention of Writing the *Scriptures*.
4. From the Direction of these *Holy Writings* to the People.
5. From the great Concernment of the People in the Matters contained in them.
6. From the *universal* Sense of the *Primitive Church* in this Matter.

1. From the general Obligation which the *Jews* were under to Read and Search their *Scriptures*. For so God requires them to keep the Words which he commanded them, in their Hearts, and to teach them diligently to their Children, and to talk of them as they sat in their Houses, and as they walked in the way, and when they lay down, and when they rose up, and to bind them as a sign upon their hands, Deut. 6. 6, 7, 8. And elsewhere, This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy Mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, speaking to the Children of Israel in general, Jos. 1. 8. And again, Ye shall lay up these my words in your heart and in your

your soul, that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your Children in the Land which the Lord swore unto your Fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth, Deut. 11. 18, 21. And to meditate on God's Law day and night. David makes a Part of the Character of the Blessed Man, Psal. 1. 3. Now if they could not keep God's Laws in their Hearts, as most certainly they could not; if they could not teach them to their Children; if they could not talk of them upon all just and proper Occasions; and in a word, if they could not meditate on them day and night without being very well acquainted with them by diligent Search and Reading them, it is most certain that to Read and Search into them was their indispensable Duty. Now if there be the same Reason why we should Read the Scriptures as there was why the Jews should, then the Obligation of these Commands must extend to us as well as to them; because the Reason of the Law is the Law; but 'tis evident, even beyond Contradiction, that there is no good Reason assignable for the one, which is not of equal force for the other; and whatsoever is objected by our Adversaries in this Point against our Reading the Scriptures, is of equal validity against the Jews Reading them. It is Objected, That our Reading them, through our Incapacity to understand them, must occasion a great many Errors and Heresies in the Church. And why should not their Reading them occasion the same, since neither their Understandings were larger than ours, nor their Scriptures clearer and more intelligible than ours? It is farther objected, That because of the many ill Examples recorded in Scripture it is dangerous for the People to read it; because of their Aptness to be misled and corrupted by Example. But I beseech you, are there not more bad Examples in the Old Testament than in the New? And were not the Jews as apt to be corrupted by them as we Christians? And therefore since these Objections do press as much against their Reading the Scriptures as ours, it is certain they ought to keep both from it or neither. Seeing therefore notwithstanding these Objections God obliged the Jews to read them, it's plain they are not of Force enough to disoblige us from doing the same.

2. From our Saviour and his Apostles Approbation of this Practice of the Jews in Pursuance of their Obligation to it, it is also evident that we are obliged to the same. That the Common People of the Jews did ordinarily read the Scriptures in our Saviour's Time, is evident not only from the Text, Search the Scriptures, (which if you take them Indicatively, are an express Declaration that they did read them; and if you take them Imperatively, necessarily imply that they themselves owned that they ought to read them) but also from those Questions which our Saviour frequently ask'd them in his Conferences with them; such as, Have ye not read? Have ye never read in the Scripture? And, Hath not the Scripture said so and so? Which Question would be very Impertinent if reading the Scripture were not then ordinarily practised by that People. And that even their holy Women were then so well instructed in the Scriptures as to be able to instruct their Children: Timothy is a signal Instance, who, though his Father were an Heathen, had known the holy Scriptures from a Child, 2 Tim. 3. 15. which Knowledge he must necessarily have derived from his Grand-Mother Lois, and his Mother Eunice, whose Faith St. Paul celebrates, 2 Tim. 1. 5. And this Practice of reading the Scriptures which was so common among that People in our Saviour's Time is so far from being discontinued, either by himself or his Apostles, that it is always mentioned by them with Applause and Approbation. Thus the Bereans are commended as a People of a nobler Strain than those of Thessalonica, because they searched the Scriptures daily whether those Things which St. Paul had preached to them were so or no. And St. Paul is so far from reprehending Timothy from meddling with the Scriptures whilst he was a Lay man, that he mentions it to his Honour, that he had known the Scriptures from a Child. And in all those Passages wherein our Saviour takes it for granted, that the common People of the Jews did read the Scripture, we have not the least Intimation of his dislike of their

Practice, which we should certainly have had, had he apprehended it to be either *dangerous* or *unwarrantable*. Seeing therefore neither our *Saviour* nor his *Apostles* do in the *least* disallow of the *Scriptures* being read by the *common People*, but on the contrary do expressly commend it; this is a *plain* Argument that it was their Intention to perpetuate the Practice of it to *future* Ages. For seeing the *Jews* read the *Scriptures* in Obedience to an *express* Command of *God*, as was shewn before, had our *Saviour* intended that they should not continue it, he would doubtless have repealed that Command by some *Countermand*, which he was so far from doing, that he not only every where allows of their reading the *Scriptures*; but also expressly approves and commends it; whereby he plainly establishes the *Obligation* of that *ancient* Command in Obedience to which they did read them.

3. From the *great* Design and Intention of Writing the *Scriptures*, it is also evident, that the *People* are still obliged to Read them. It is plain the *great* Design of Writing the *Scripture* was to instruct Men in the Knowledge, and persuade them to the Practice of *true Religion*; For thus of the *Scriptures* of the *Old Testament* St. Paul tells us, That *whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning*, Rom. 15. 4. and for our *admonition*, 1 Cor. 10. 11. And as for the *New Testament*, we are told, That it was written *that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his Name*, John 20. 31. And St. Peter tells us, That he wrote both his *Epistles* to stir up the *pure Minds* of *Christians* by way of remembrance, and to put them in mind of the *Words* which were spoken before by the *holy Prophets*, and of the *Commandment* of the *Apostles* of our *Lord and Saviour*, 2 Pet. 3. 1. And St. John gives us this account of his Writing his *Epistles*, *These things have I written to you that ye sin not*, 1 John 2. 1. And St. Jude, this of his, *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common Salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints*, ver. 3. These are the Ends for which the *Scripture* was written; But how can the Writing of it contribute to these Ends if we are not permitted to Read what is written? For the *Scripture* was written to the *People* as well as to the *Clergy*, as I shall shew by and by; but to what purpose should it be written to the *People* to instruct and admonish them, if the *People* are not allowed to Read its *Instructions* and *Admonitions*? What Influence could the Writing it have upon the *People's* Belief, that *Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, if they had been debar'd from acquainting themselves with what is written concerning him? How could it stir up their Remembrance, if they might not Read what it suggested to their Memory? By what *other* way can it keep the *People* from Sinning, but by *Motives* and *Persuasions*? But how should its *Motives* and *Persuasions* affect their *Minds*, if they are not allowed to consult and understand them? Upon what Account can it move the *People* earnestly to contend for the Faith once delivered to the *Saints*, if they are not allowed to learn from it either what that Faith is, or what those Reasons are which oblige them to contend for it? So that to write to the *People* on purpose to instruct and reform them, and at the same time to purpose to debar them from Reading it, is either to suppose that the Writing will operate like a Charm, or to purpose a downright Contradiction. For how oddly would it have look'd, if in the *aforecited* Passages, the *Apostles* had express'd themselves thus: '*These things are written for your Learning and Admonition; but 'tis by no means fit you should learn from them what they teach and admonish you. These Things are written that ye should believe that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God; but they are not written that you should enquire of them whether Jesus be the Christ or the Son of God. These Things are written to put you in Mind of what hath been spoken by the Prophets and Apostles; but they were not written that you might acquaint your selves by them what the Prophets and Apostles spake. These Things are written that you should not sin; but beware*' you

‘ you do not read them lest the bad Examples recorded in them occasion you to sin. In short, These Things were written to excite you earnestly to contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints; but you are by no means allowed to enquire into them, lest you should misunderstand them, and so instead of contending for the Faith you should contend for Heresie and false Doctrine. Had the Apostles thus expressed themselves, I appeal to any reasonable Man whether these Passages would not have startled his Understanding, and tempted him to question whether the Authors of them were well in their Wits; and yet this must have been their meaning, supposing that they meant that the People should not read what they wrote.

4. From the Direction of these *Holy Writings* to the People, it is also evident, that the People are still obliged to Read, or acquaint themselves with them. For so we find the Law of Moses was delivered by God to all the People as well as to him and Aaron; and (as was shewn before) they were all of them commanded to search and enquire into it. And so also were the Sermons of the Prophets, which are usually prefaced with an, *Hear O Israel, Hear O House of Judah, Hear O House of Jacob, and Hear all ye of Judah.* So also our Blessed Saviour Preach'd his Sermons and Parables, not only to his Apostles, and seventy Disciples, but also to the People, and to the Multitudes. And so also his Apostles direct their Epistles, not only to the Saints, to the faithful in Christ Jesus, to the Beloved, which in the Language of Scripture includes every Christian; but also to all that are at Rome, to all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, to all the Saints which are in Achaia, to all the Saints which are at Philippi, to the twelve Tribes which are scattered abroad, to the Strangers scattered through Pontus, Galatia, &c. and to them which have obtained like precious Faith with us; that is, to all the Jewish Christians dispersed over the World. Seeing therefore the Scriptures were directed to all, as well Laity as Clergy, this not only gives a Right to all to Read them, but also lays an Obligation upon all to acquaint themselves with them. For the very directing such a Writing or Epistle to such or such Persons, doth, in the Sense of all the World, imply, that he who writes doth design and intend, that they to whom he directs it should Read and Peruse it; and therefore, since the Scriptures were written to all, that is a plain Intimation that it was the Intention of the Writers that all should Read them. And for us not to Read what God hath written, and directed to us, is by implication of Fact, a *Prophane Neglect* and Contempt of his Mercy, and looks as if we either thought him such an *Insignificant Being*, or our selves so little concerned in any thing that he can say or write to us, as that it would not be worth our while to receive, and peruse the Contents of those sacred Epistles, which by the Hands of his *Holy Penmen* he hath vouchsafed to direct to us. Nor is it a sufficient Excuse for our Contempt, to say, that in Consideration of our own Proneness to Err and Mistake, we ought to content our selves with this, that our *spiritual Guides* should Read God's Writings for us, and deliver the Sense and Contents of them to us: For to be sure, had God intended that the Priests only should read them, he would have directed them only to the Priests, and ordered them only to deliver the Sense of them to the People; and therefore since he hath directed them to both, this necessarily implies that it was his Intention that both should read them. For if God had not directed them to Men, neither Priests nor People were obliged to read them; and therefore seeing the great Reason why any Men ought to Read them is, because they are directed to Men; this Reason obliges all Men to Read them, because they are directed to all Men. For not to be highly concerned to know and understand what it is that God writes to us, is an Argument that we have a very mean Regard both of his Majesty, and his Mind, and Will. But to be sure whosoever is highly concerned to know what such a Writing contains, will, if he can, be very curious to peruse it with his own Eyes at least, supposing that it is not unlawful for him so to do; because there is nothing gives that Satisfaction to a Man's Mind as the Information of his own Sense. So that for Men wilfully to neglect

neglect reading the *Scripture* which *God* hath so expressly directed to them, and thereby not only licensed but obliged them to read it, argues a very *prophane* Disregard both of the Author of it, and of the Matter it contains; and for any Man, or Society of Men, to forbid the *People* to read what *God* hath written and directed to them, is not only to deprive them of a Right which *God* hath given them, but also to acquit them of a Duty which he hath laid upon them. For *St. Paul*, in those Epistles which he wrote to the *Christian People* in general of such and such Churches, still takes it for granted that they would read them; as being not only warranted, but obliged thereunto by his writing them; for so *Ephes. 3. 3, 4* speaking of that great Mystery of the calling the *Gentiles* which *God* had revealed to him, concerning which saith he, *I wrote afore in few words, whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.* So also *2 Cor. 1. 13.* *We write no other things unto you, than what you read,* that is, than what you may at least, and are obliged to read by virtue of our writing them to you. And as for his Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, which he wrote to that whole Church, he gives charge that it should be read to all the holy Brethren, *1 Thes. 5. 27.* So also for that of the *Colossians*, *When this Epistle is, or hath been, read amongst you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea.* Where you see he all along either supposes or requires that what he wrote to all should be read by all and to all. If therefore this Authority of *St. Paul* be sufficient to over-rule the Authority of any pretended Successor of *St. Peter*, then it's certain that reading the *Scripture* is still the Duty of Lay-men, notwithstanding any *Papal* Prohibition to the contrary.

5. From the great Concernment the *People* have in the Matters contained in *Scripture*, it is also evident, that they are obliged, if they are able, to read it, and acquaint themselves with it: For as for the Matters which the *Scriptures* contain, they are such as are of everlasting Moment to the *People* as well as to the Clergy. The Articles of Faith which the *Scripture* proposes are as necessary to be believed by the *People* as by the Clergy. The Precepts of Life which the *Scripture* prescribes, are as necessary to be practised by the *People*, as by the Clergy. The Promises and Threats with which the *Scripture* enforces those Precepts are as necessary to be considered by the *People* as by the Clergy: And seeing both are equally concerned in the great Matters which the *Scriptures* contain, what Reason can be assigned why both should not be obliged to acquaint themselves with them? I know 'tis pretended that it is the proper Office of the Clergy to study the *Scriptures* for the *People* as well as for themselves, and that therefore the *People* are obliged to receive the Sense of the *Scriptures* upon Trust from their Teachers, without making any farther Enquiry. But I beseech you, are you sure that your Teachers are infallible: That they are not so is most certain, 'it being notorious that most of the prevailing Heresies of *Christendom* were first set on broach by the Teachers of the Church, and it is impossible they should be infallible, who have so often actually erred even in Matters of the highest Moment. Suppose then what is fairly supposable, that your Teachers should mislead you, and not only into dangerous but damnable Errors; Are you sure that they shall be damned for you, and that you shall escape? If so, then Heresy in the Laity can never be damnable, if they receive it upon Trust from their Teachers; and consequently their Souls are as safe under the Conduct of false Teachers as true; provided always that right or wrong they believe what is taught them. But if your selves must give an Account to *God* as well for your Faith as for your Manners, and are liable in your own Persons to eternal Damnation (as most certainly you are) as well for Heresy as Immorality, then it is the most unreasonable Thing in the World, that you should in all Things be obliged to believe your Teachers upon Trust; for at this rate a Man may be eternally damned, merely for believing what he is obliged to believe. If it be said that the *People* are not bound to believe what their particular Pastor teaches, but what the Church teaches them, and the

the Church cannot err, though their *particular Pastor* may; I would fain know how shall the *People* be otherwise informed what the Church teaches them than by the Expositions of their *particular Pastors*, they being at least as *incapable* of informing themselves what the Doctrine of the Church is, as what the Doctrine of the Scripture is; and therefore if their *Pastor* should err damnably in expounding to them what the Church teaches, as it is supposable he may if he be not *infallible*, there is no Remedy but they must err damnably in believing whatsoever their *Pastor* teaches. But we are farther told, that it is *sufficient* for the *People* that they believe in the *gross* that whatsoever the Church teaches is *true*, and that as for the *particulars* there is no Necessity that they should be informed about them; because he who believes that all that the Church teaches is *true*, implicitly believes all that is *necessary*, seeing the Church teaches all that is *necessary*. But the mischief of it is, that this *compendious Way* of Belief is utterly *insignificant*, and doth no way comport with the Design and Intention of a *Christian's Faith*. For God doth not require our Faith merely for its *own* sake, but in order to a farther End, that it may purify our Hearts, and Influence our Lives and Manners; that is, that the Matters which we believe might, by being believed by us, affect our Wills, and continually move and persuade us to abstain from all *Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts*, and to live *soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World*; and if our Faith hath not this Effect upon us, St. James assures us, that it is a *dead Faith*, and will profit us nothing. But how is it *possible* that our believing *such and such* Propositions should move and persuade us, if we do not know what those Propositions are, and what is the *true Sense and Meaning* of them? What Man can be persuaded by such Proposals as he doth not understand, and of which he hath no Manner of *explicite Knowledge*? An *Heathen* that believes that whatsoever God teaches is *true*, doth implicitly believe that *Jesus Christ* came from God to reveal his Will to Mankind, because it is certain that God teaches this; But what is he the *better* for this his *implicite Belief*? What Influence can it have upon his Heart and Manners, who perhaps never heard of *Jesus Christ*, nor of any *one* Proposition which he revealed to the World? And so he who believes that whatsoever the Church teaches is *true*, doth implicitly believe that there shall be a *future Judgment*, a *Resurrection of the Dead*, and an *everlasting State of Happiness or Misery after Death*, because all these Things the Church teaches; but if he never hear of them, or hath no *explicite Knowledge and Belief* of them, how is it *possible* they should operate on his Will and Affections, or ever persuade him to be the *better Man*, or the *better Christian*? And the same is to be said of all the *other Articles of Christianity*. So that either we must believe to no Purpose, and content our selves with an *insignificant Faith* that will not at all avail us; or take up our Faith upon Trust from *fallible Teachers*, who may mislead us into *damnable Errors*; and if they should, we must be *liable* to answer for it in our Persons, and at our own *eternal Peril*; or, which is the Truth of the Case, we must be allowed to enquire, and judge for our selves at least in all Things *necessary* to our *eternal Salvation*. Seeing therefore there are many Things in Scripture which the Scripture it self obliges me upon Pain of Damnation to believe; it hence necessarily follows, that so far forth as the Scripture obliges me to believe what it teaches, it obliges me to understand what it teaches, otherwise I must believe I know not what, which is impossible; and so far as the Scripture obliges me to understand what it teaches, it must oblige me to *search, enquire and judge* what it teaches; because I cannot understand without enquiring and judging: But how can I enquire what the Scripture teaches, if I cannot be admitted to read and consult the Scripture? And so again, there are many Duties in Scripture which the Scripture it self obliges me to practise upon pain of *eternal Damnation*; But how can it oblige me to Practise what it doth not oblige me to Understand? Or how can it oblige me to understand what it doth not oblige me to enquire after? But how can I enquire what it is that the Scripture obliges me to Practise, when I am forbid all access to it, and it is lockt up from me in an *unknown*

known Tongue? In short therefore, seeing the Things contained in *Scripture* are of the *highest* Moment to the *People*, and it is as much as their Souls are worth not to Believe and Practise what it Teaches; and seeing they can neither Believe nor Practise what they do not understand; it is of *infinite* Concern to them so far at *least* to Read, Consult, and Understand the *Scripture*, as they stand obliged to Believe and Practise its Doctrines and Precepts.

6. And Lastly, From the *Universal* Sense of the *Primitive Church* in this matter, it is also evident, That the *People* are obliged to read or acquaint themselves with the *Holy Scripture*. For the *Primitive Church* for above *six hundred* Years were so far from debarring the *People* the use of the *Scripture*, that it continually urged and press'd it upon them as a matter of *indispensable* Obligation. For so *Origen* wishes, That *all would do as it is written*, viz. *Search the Scriptures*. So also *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Hearken ye that are afar off, hearken ye that be near; the Word of God is hid from no Man: It is a Light common to all Men, and there is no Darkness in it.* So also

* In Orat. adhort.
ad Gent.

|| In Psal. 86.

*St. Austin**, *Think it not sufficient that ye hear the Scriptures in the Church, but do you also read the Scriptures your selves in your own Houses, or get some other to read them to you.* So also *St. Jerom*||, *The Lord hath spoken to us by his Gospel, not that a few, but all should understand.* And elsewhere, speaking of the Women that were at *Bethlehem* with *Paula*, *It was not lawful, saith he, for any one of all the Sisters to be ignorant of the Psalms, nor to pass over any Day without learning some*

* Ep. ad Coloss. c. 3.

* Ep. ad Colos.
Hom. 9.

Part of the Scriptures. And elsewhere*, *We are taught, saith he, That the Lay-People ought to have the Word of God not only sufficiently, but also with abundance, that so they may be able to teach and counsel others.* So also *St. Chrysostome**, *Hear me O Laity, get ye the Bible the most wholsom remedy for the Soul; and if ye will no more, at least get the New Testament, St. Paul's Epistles, and the Acts, that they may be your continual and earnest Teachers.* And elsewhere he affirms*, *That it is more necessary for the Lay-People to read*

* In Mat. Hom. 3.

And to cite no more of the *infinite Authorities* of the *Fathers* to this Purpose, *St. Basil* observes*, *The Scripture of God is like an Apothecary's Shop full of Medicines of sundry Sorts, that so every Man may there choose a convenient Remedy for his Disease.* And that the *People* as well as the *Priests* were then allowed the Use of the *Bible*, is evident from a *notorious* Matter of Fact; for when the *Roman Emperors* endeavoured to force the *Christians* by Persecution and Torments to deliver up their *Bibles* to be burnt, that so by extinguishing those *Sacred Records* they might extinguish *Christianity*, they examined not only the *Bishops* and *Clergy*, but also the *People* of all Degrees and both Sexes; many of whom, as well Women as Men, owned that they had *Bibles*, but rather chose to die than to deliver them up; and many others, who to avoid Death, delivered up their *Bibles*, and are therefore branded with the *ignominious* Name of *Traditors*, for which they were excluded the *Communion* of the *Church*, and could not be readmitted without a *long* and *severe* Penance.

* In Psal. 1.

But it is impossible the *People* could have been *Traditors* if they had had no *Bibles* to deliver up; and therefore being so, is an *undeniable* Argument, that the *People* were then allowed the Use of the *Scripture* as well as the *Priests*. And by the way, it's very *strange* that any Community of *Christians* should think that a *proper* Way to extinguish *Heresy*, which those *Heathen Persecutors* made use of to extinguish *Christianity*. But that in those *first* Ages these *People* were allowed the Use of the *Bible*, is a Case so *plain*, that they who of *later* Ages have thought meet to repeal this Allowance, have never been able to produce so much as one *probable* Colour of *Primitive* Authority to warrant their Practice. And though in *other* Points they not only claim but ravish *Antiquity*, in despite

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of Modesty as well as Truth; yet here they are so abandoned of all Pretence to it, that they are not able to produce so much as *one* Passage of any *Primitive Father* that seems to discourage the *People* from Reading the *Scripture*, and much less that forbids them so to do. And 'tis notorious to all the World, That in the *Primitive Ages*, when the *Latin* was the *Vulgar Language* of the *Romans*, the *Bible* was translated into that *Language* for the Use and Instruction of the *People*; but when through the many Incurfions of the *Barbarous Nations* into the *Roman Empire* this *Language* was worn out by degrees, and instead of being the *vulgar*, became an *unknown Tongue* to that *People*; the *Governours* of that *Church*, having to ferve their own *secular Ends*, introduced into it sundry corrupt Doctrines and Practices which they feared the Light of the *Scripture* might detect to the *People*, they thought it most *advifable* not to translate it into the *New Vulgar*, but to let it remain lockt up from their Cognizance in the *Old Latin*, which by this Time very few, except the *Clergy*, understood. And when for some Time it had lain hid from them in an *unknown Tongue*, they proceeded at last wholly to forbid the Use of it to the *Laity*. So that about the *Ninth* and *Tenth* Ages, which all agree were over-cast with *gross* Darknefs and Ignorance, the *Scriptures* were shut up, like the *Sybilline Oracles* in the *Capitol*, and none but the *Priests* were allowed to Read and Consult them. And though upon the Commencement of the *Reformation*, the *Bible* was for some time fet forth again in *sundry vulgar Languages* among the *People*, yet did the *Guides* of that *Church* soon find it *necessary*, for Defence of their own *Unfcriptural* Doctrines and Practices, to remit it to its *old Confinement*. For,

First, The *Council of Trent*, in the *Fourth Rule* of their *Index Expurgatorius*, forbids the *Laity* to read, or so much as to have the *Bible* in the *Vulgar Language*, though translated by those of their own *Church*, without a License in Writing from the *Bishop* of the *Diocess*, or the *Inquisitor*; and this upon Pain of not receiving Absolution of their Sins unless they delivered up those their *Bibles* to their *Ordinary*. To which Rule, *Pope Clement the Eighth* afterwards added Observation, That hitherto by the Command and Practice of the *Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition*, the Faculty of granting such Licenses for reading or keeping *Bibles* in the *Vulgar Tongue*, or any *Summaries* or *Historical Compendiums* of the said *Bibles*, is taken away; which is to be inviolably observed. And in the *Index of Prohibited Books*, published by *Pope Alexander the Seventh*, not only those *Bibles* that are translated and printed by *Hereticks*, but also all *Bibles* in any *Vulgar Tongue* are absolutely forbidden. And though, where the *Reformation* hath prevailed, they are forced against their own Laws more freely to indulge the Use of the *Scripture* to their *People*, yet in those Countries where they are sole Masters this Priviledge is very rarely granted.

And now being thus necessitated to deprive the *People* of the Light of the *Scripture*, lest they should thereby discover their Errors and Corruptions, it was necessary for them to invent some plausible Pretences to justify a Practice so contrary both to *Scripture* and *Primitive Antiquity*, and so enormously Derogatory to the common Right of *Christians*; and when it must be done, it is a very hard Case if Men of Wit and Learning cannot find something to say for any thing. Now the two main Pretences that are urged in this Case are;

First, That a general Permission of the Use of *Scripture* to the *People* must necessarily open a wide Door to Errors and Heresies.

Secondly, That it will prove an unavoidable Occasion of great Corruptions in Manners.

1. That a *general* Permission of the Use of *Scripture* to the *People* must necessarily open a *wide* Door to *Errors* and *Heresies*; because there are many Things in *Scripture* which are *hard* to be understood, and which the *Unlearned*, who are *unqualified* to understand them *aright*, will be apt to wrest into a *wrong* Sense to their *own* Destruction. To which I answer,

1. That this Reason holds as *good* against the writing and publishing the *Scripture* at *first* in Languages that were vulgarly known to the *People*, as against the Translating them now into the *vulgar* Languages. For the *Hebrew*, in which the *Old Testament* was written, was the *vulgar* Language of the *Jews*, and the *Greek* in which the *New Testament* was written, was then the most *vulgar* Language of the *Jews*, and *Gentiles*; and yet notwithstanding there were the same *hard* Things then in the *Scripture* as now, and the *People* were as *unlearned* then, and as apt to wrest these *hard* *Scriptures* to their *own* Destruction then as now; yet *God* notwithstanding thought fit to write and publish it in Languages that were most *known* to the *People*; and therefore, either we must say, that he did not take that Care that he ought to have done to prevent *Errors* and *Heresies*, or that this is no *good* Reason why the *People* should be debarr'd of the *Scripture* in their own *vulgar* Language. For why should not the Writing the *Scriptures* at *first* in the *vulgar* Languages as much open a Door to *Heresie*, as the translating them afterwards, seeing it is neither their being written in the *Vulgar* Language, nor their being translated into the *Vulgar* Language, but their being in the *Vulgar* Language that is here pretended to set open this *dangerous* Door to *Heresies*.

2. This Objection strikes with *equal* Force against *God's* writing and publishing the *Scripture* to the *People*, as against their reading and consulting it. For that *God* wrote these *Scriptures* to the *People*, and that in so doing, he not only gave them a Right, but also laid on them an Obligation to read them, I have already shewed. If therefore the Reading the *Scripture* by the *People* be such an *unavoidable* Inlet of *Error* and *Heresy*, as this Objection pretends, it was doubtless very unadvisedly done of *God* to publish such a *dangerous* Book to the World; which those for whom he published, and to whom he directed it cannot familiarly converse with without *eminent* Peril of being infected with *Heresy*. And if the *Scripture* be such a *quarrelsome* Knife as these Men say it is, that the *People* can hardly touch it without cutting their Fingers, they are certainly more beholding to the *Church* for taking it from them, than they are to *God* for bestowing it on them.

3. This Objection makes as much at least against the *Priests* Reading the *Scripture* as the *People*. For most of those *Heresies* that have been broacht to the *People* were *first* brewed by the *Priests*, from whose Lips the *People* do commonly derive their *Errors*, as well as their *Knowledge*: Witness those *famous* *Heresies* with which the *Christian* World hath been so distracted from *one* Generation to *another*, such as the *Novatian*, the *Donatist*, the *Arian*, the *Pelagian*, the *Eutichian*, the *Eunomian*; all which Counterfeits, and a great many more, were *first* coined by the *Clergy*, and dispersed for *current* *Christianity* among the *Laity*. And therefore, if this Pretence, that the Reading of *Scripture* opens a Gap to *Heresy*, be a *sufficient* Reason why the *Laity* should not read it, it is a much more *sufficient* Reason why the *Clergy* should not read it. For it requires Skill and Learning as well to wrest the *Scripture* into such *false* Senses as are likely to impose upon the World, as to interpret it into its *true* Sense; and I am very sure that it ordinarily requires more Wit and Art, to extort from the *Scripture* *probable* Errors, than it doth to discover by it *necessary* Truth; and if so, then if the Danger of letting in *Heresies* is a *true* Reason why any should not
Read

Read it, it is much more a *true* Reason why the *Learned* should not Read it than the *Unlearned*; and consequently why the *Priests* should not Read it than the *People*, seeing the *former* are more qualified to extract *Heresies* from it than the *latter*. If therefore this Objection signify any Thing, it must be this, That it is a very *dangerous* Thing for any Body to Read the *Bible*; that this same *Divine* Book, which God thought fit to publish to the World, and which the *Primitive Church* thought fit to oblige all that were able to Peruse and Study, is now become such a *dangerous* Inlet of *Heresy*, that like *Pandora's Box*, you can no sooner open it, but Swarms of *Errors* and *False Doctrines* will presently fly abroad into the World; so that it would be very well for the World if it were either utterly extinguished, or hid in some *inaccessible* Repository, where no *Mortal Eye* might ever approach it.

4. This Objection expressly contradicts our *Saviour*, and the *Primitive Fathers*. For *Mat. 22. 29.* our *Saviour* tells the *Sadducees*, who were cavilling with him about the Resurrection; *Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.* Had therefore the *Sadducees* been of the same Mind with our *Objectors* they would doubtless have told him, *by your good Leave Sir, in this Point you your self are in an Error, for in all Probability had we known the Scripture, or been intimately acquainted with it, we should have err'd much more.* Either therefore our *Saviour* was mistaken in charging the Error of the *Sadducees* upon their Ignorance of *Scripture*, or our *Objectors* are mistaken in making it so *necessary* an Expedient for the Prevention of Error to forbid the *People* being acquainted with *Scripture*; for 'tis plain, *He* and *They* are of quite *Different* Opinions in the Case. But whatever their Opinion is, I am sure the *Primitive Fathers* were of the same Opinion with our *Saviour*: For *Irenæus* writing of the *Valentinian Hereticks**, *All those Errors they fall into, because they know not the Scriptures.* So *St. Jerom*||, *We must search the Scriptures with all Diligence, that so as being good Exchangers we may know the lawful Coyn from the Copper.* And elsewhere, *That infinite Evils arise from Ignorance of the Scriptures, and that from this Cause the greatest Part of Heresies have proceeded.* *St. Chrysostom* is of Opinion, *That if Men would be conversant with the Scriptures and attend to them, they would not only not fall into Errors themselves, but be able to rescue those that are deceived; and that the Scriptures would instruct Men both in right Opinions, and good Life.* And to name no more, *Theophylact* tells us, *That nothing can deceive them who search the Holy Scriptures; for that saith he is the Candle whereby the Thief is discovered.* But it seems, according to *Modern Experiments*, this *Candle of Scripture* rather serves to light the Thief into the House, than to discover him when he is there; and therefore it is thought *necessary* for *honest Men's* Security either that it should be wholly extinguished, or at least hinder'd from giving Light by being shut up in a *dark Lanthorn* of an *unknown Tongue*. But when they who were once the *honest Men* are become the *Thieves*, it is no wonder that they should thus change their Note, and complain of the Light of this *Candle* as *dangerous* to them, which heretofore they esteemed their *greatest* Security. I am sure the Reason assigned by *St. Peter*, why some Men wrested the *Scriptures* to their own Destruction, was not their reading the *Scripture*, but contrary-wise their not reading it enough, *which they that are unlearned*, saith he, *wrest to their own Destruction*, 2 *Pet. 3. 16.* *Unlearned* in what? Why doubtless in the *Holy Scripture*. For as to *humane Learning*, *St. Peter* himself was as *unlearned* as they; and if it were their being *unlearned* in *Scripture* that occasioned them to wrest it into an *heretical* Sense, then it is not Mens reading the *Scripture* that leads them into *Heresy*, but their not reading it enough. To say therefore that the *Peoples* reading the *Scripture* is an Inlet of *Heresy*, and to say, no it is not their reading it, but their not reading it enough is the Inlet of *Heresy*, is an *express* Contradiction; the *former* our *Objectors* say, the *latter* our *Saviour*, his *Apostles*, and the *Pri-*

* Lib. 3. c. 12.
|| In Ep. ad Ephef.
1. 3. c. 4.

mitive Church say ; and I think it is no *hard* Matter to determine which of these *two* Contradictions we ought to believe.

5. And Lastly, According to this Objection, the *best* Way to keep Men from being *Hereticks* is to deprive them of all Means of arriving at the Knowledge of the Truth : And this, I confess, is a very *certain* Way, though not a very *Honest* one. Let Men know nothing of *Religion*, and to be sure they cannot be *Hereticks*, it being *impossible* for Men to err in their Conceptions of those Things whereof they have no Notion. Put out a Man's Eyes, and you certainly prevent his being imposed upon by *false* Medium's of Sight to mistake *one* Colour or Figure for *another* ; and yet I fancy most Men would think this a *cruel* Kind of Courtesy. But if Men must not be allowed *Scripture* to instruct them in the Truth, for this Reason ; because it may occasionally mislead them into *Errors* and *Heresies*, then they must be allowed no Means of Instruction that may occasion them to err, and consequently no Means at all, there being no *imaginable* Means of Instruction which may not be an Occasion of *Errors* and *Heresies*. Is the *Scripture* it self in its *own* Nature an Occasion of misleading Men into *Heresy*, or not ? If you say it is, consider before you say it, how it could consist with the Truth and Veracity of *God* to publish such a Book to the World as tends in its *own* Nature to seduce and mislead the Understandings of those that read it. If you say it is not *so* in it self, but only that it may be so accidentally, I would fain know what Means of Instruction is there which may not accidentally become an Occasion of misleading Men into *Heresy* ; and therefore if this be a *sufficient* Reason to deprive Men of *Scripture*, it is *sufficient* to deprive them of all *other* Means of Instruction. And seeing the Knowledge of *Religion* is the Food of Mens Souls, to keep them in Ignorance for fear they should err, is to deny them Food for fear they should surfeit. There is no doubt but Men whose Minds are tinctured with *Heretical* Pravity will be apt enough to extract the Poison of *Error* out of the *clearest* Conveyances and Discoveries of Truth ; but what then ? Do not *bad* Men ordinarily apply the *best* Things to the *worst* Purposes ? If Men fall into *Heresy* by reading the *Scripture*, where lies the Fault ? Not in the *Scripture* sure, no *Christian* will pretend that ; and if it be in themselves, in their *Pride*, or *Vain-glory*, or *Covetousness*, or *Sensuality*, (as it is demonstrable it is) is it *just* that *All* should be deprived of it, because *some ill* Men have made an *ill* Use of it ? Some Men have surfeited by Eating and Drinking, Is it *just* that all Mankind therefore should be deprived of Meat and Drink ? Suppose a Prince, pretending to be an *infallible* Geographer, should issue out a Proclamation commanding all his Subjects to travel at *Midnight*, and should assign *this* as the Reason of it, that he had been certainly informed that *several* of them had lost their Way at *Noon*, and wandred into Bogs and Precipices by the Light of the Sun ; would any *one* imagin *this* to be the *true* Reason, or rather would not every *one* believe that his *true* Design was to keep his People in Ignorance of the Roads and Situation of his Country, that so they might never be able to discover the Errors of his Maps, which would perhaps discover him to be not only a *fallible* Geographer, but also a very *erroneous* one ? And where the *People* are forbid travelling in the Light of the *Scripture*, whatever may be pretended, *wise* Men will believe that the *true* Reason is not to prevent the *Peoples* falling into *Errors*, but to prevent the discovering the *Errors* of those to whose Guidance and Direction they are wholly and solely subjected. And this I conceive is a *sufficient* Answer to the *first* Objection, *viz.* That the Allowance of the *Scripture* to the *People*, is a *dangerous* Inlet of *Error* and *Heresy*. I proceed therefore to the Second, which is this ;

Obj. 2. That there are *many* Things recorded in *Scripture* which are very *apt* to suggest *lewd* Thoughts to the *People*, and thereby to corrupt their Manners, as particularly the *many bad* Examples therein related, which are of a very *contagious*

gious Nature, and consequently *dangerous* for the *People* to converse with. In Answer to which I desire these *four* Things may be seriously considered.

1. That this *Objection* strikes as much against the *Scripture* it self as against the *People's* reading it. For what *worse* Thing can be said of the *Scripture* than this, that it is such an *infectious* Book, so *apt* to excite *impure* Thoughts in Men's Minds, and to kindle *lewd* Affections in their Hearts, that it is by no Means fit the *People* should read it? Should this be said to a *Turk*, or a *Heathen*, who had never read *one* Word in the *Bible*, he would certainly conclude it to be nothing but a *Canto of Ribaldries* written for no *other* End but to provoke and entertain the *lascivious* Inclinations of Mankind. And certainly had our *Objectors* but as much Reverence for this *Holy Book* as they pretend, they would rather oblige their *People* to read it, than withhold it from them, upon a pretence that doth so scandalously reflect upon its Reputation. If there be any such Passages in *Scripture* as are *apt* to start *lewd* Thoughts in Men's Minds, the utmost that can be fairly pretended, is, That those Passages ought to have been left out of the *Peoples Bibles*, or at least to have been left *untranslated*: But to urge *this* as a Reason, why all the rest of the *Scripture* should be denied to the *People*, insinuates, as if the *whole* were nothing else but a *meer* Kennel of *contagious* Obscenities. For to urge that for a Reason, why the *Scripture* in *general* should not be read by, or to the *People*, (which at most is only a Reason why some *few* Passages of it should not be read by them) is to suppose the whole *Scripture* to be made up of such Passages as are *apt* to infuse *vicious* Thoughts into the *People*; than which what can there be supposed more *false* in it self, or more *derogatory* to the *Scripture*?

2. This *Objection*, if it proves any Thing, doth as well prove that it was *unfit* for *God* to publish the *Scripture* to the *People*, as it is for the *People* to read it. For is it fit, that *He*, who is a *God of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*, should publish such Things to the World as are *apt* to engender *impure* Thoughts in Men's Minds? And yet though Men's Minds were as *apt* to imbibe *impure* Thoughts when these Things were *first* published, as they are now; this hindred not *God* from publishing them to the World in such Languages as are best *known* and *understood* by the *People*. Either therefore *God* did not so well know what is *apt* to corrupt Men's Minds as our *wise* *Objectors*; or he was *less* concerned than they to preserve them from being corrupted; or what they object is both *false* and *scandalous*. For to say, That the *wise* and *holy* *God* hath published such Things to the World as his Ministers find *necessary* to conceal from the World, lest its Thoughts should be corrupted by them, is in effect to say, that his Ministers are grown *wiser* than he, or are more concerned for the Interest of Holiness than he. If the *vicious* Examples, for Instance, that are recorded in *Scripture* are more *apt* to deprave Men than to instruct them, what need they have been recorded? What is there in the *meer* Story of *Noah's Drunkenness* and *Incest*, and *David's Adultery*, considered abstractly from the *good* Instructions it gives, that should move *God* to deliver it down to all *future* Posterity? If it serve no *good* Ends, it is recorded to a *bad* purpose; and therefore, if for this Reason, because it is *apt* to corrupt Men's Minds, the *Church* be obliged to conceal it now, for the very same Reason *God* was obliged to have concealed it *for ever*. Either therefore we must say that *God* did very *ill* in publishing it, or that the *Church* doth very *ill* in suppressing it; for *God* could have no *other* End in publishing it to the World, but only to instruct the World by it. If therefore it be not *instructive*, *God* was mistaken; but if it be, it is *fit* the World should be acquainted with it.

3. That this *Objection* doth expressly contradict the *Scripture* it self; For whereas it tells us, that the *bad* Examples recorded in *Scripture* would be *apt* to deprave

prave the Peoples Minds and Manners, St Paul tells us the quite contrary: *These Things were our Examples. to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they, i. e. the Israelites in the Wilderness, lusted. Neither be ye Idolaters, as were some of them: Neither let us commit Fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand: Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of Serpents: Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer: Now all these things happened unto them for Examples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come, 1 Cor. 10. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.* Whereas this *Objection* urges that there are sundry Passages in *Scripture* which should the *People* read, would excite evil Thoughts in their Minds. The same St. Paul tells us, *That all Scripture is profitable, not only for Doctrine and Reproof, but also for Correction, for instruction in Righteousness, 2 Tim. 3. 16.* Whereas this *Objection* pretends, that it would be very unsafe for young *People* especially, to be allowed the *Scripture*, because there are several amorous Stories and Passages in it which will be apt to suggest wanton Thoughts to their gay and amorous Fancies. David, it is plain, was of a quite contrary Mind; for wherewith, saith he, *shall a young Man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word, Psal. 119. 9.* than which two Passages what Assertions can be more contrary one to another.

4. And lastly, That supposing this *Objection* to be thus far true, that there are some Passages in *Scripture* which may sometimes occasionally excite bad Thoughts in Men's Minds, yet this is no just Reason why the Use of *Scripture* should be forbid to the *People*. For every Thing which the *People* occasionally make bad Uses of, is for that Reason to be forbid to them; even Prayer and the Sacraments, and the Profession of Christianity ought to be forbidden them as well as the *Scripture*, seeing of the one as well as of the other, many *People* do occasionally make very bad Uses. So long as the *Scripture* is good in it self, and apt in its own Nature to instruct and edifie those that read it, this is sufficient not only to warrant the Peoples Use of it, but to enjoin and require it; and if it sometimes occasion corrupt Thoughts in corrupt Minds, this is no more a Reason why the *People* should be deprived of the Light of it, than some bad Mens making ill Use of the Light of the Sun is, why the Sun should be extinguished, or why the *People* should be for ever shut up from the Light of it in dark and dismal Dungeons. But as for those very Passages in *Scripture*, which do sometimes occasion ill Thoughts in Men's Minds, they are so far from doing it of their own Natures, that as they are delivered in *Scripture*, there is nothing more naturally apt to repress bad Thoughts, and to arm and fortifie Mens Minds against them. As for instance, The bad Examples recorded in *Scripture* are generally delivered with infamous Characters, severe Prohibitions, and dreadful Instances of God's Vengeance attending them, which render them much more apt to repress than to excite evil Thoughts in Mens Minds; to quicken them to Prayer and Watchfulness against Temptations, and when at any Time they have been overcome by them, to encourage them to Repentance; or when they have overcome them, to stir them up to a grateful Acknowledgment of that preventing and assisting Grace of God, by which they have been enabled to resist and repel them. These are the natural Uses of those bad Examples recorded in *Scripture*; and therefore, if instead of making these Uses of them, some Men pervert them to bad Purposes, that is their Faults, and not the *Scriptures*. It is sufficient that the bad Examples in *Scripture*, as they are there recorded, are in themselves of excellent Use to the *People*; but should Men be deprived of the Use of every good Thing they abuse, I would fain know what one good Thing would be left free to their Enjoyment. And now having proved at large the Peoples Right and Obligation to Use and Search the Holy *Scripture*, and answered the main *Objections* against it, I shall conclude with these two Inferences from the whole.

1. If the *People* are obliged to acquaint themselves with *Scripture*, then they are obliged to receive upon the Authority of *Scripture* those *Divine Truths* which it proposes to their Belief. For to what *other* end should we be obliged to read and consult the *Word of God*, but only that we may learn from it what is his Mind and Will? But how should we learn from *Scripture* what God's Mind is, if we are not to believe what he therein declares upon *Scripture* Authority? If I must not believe when I read the *Scripture* that this is God's Mind, because the *Scripture* says so, it is *impossible* I should ever learn God's Mind by reading it; and consequently I am obliged to read it to *no* Purpose: For there is nothing can teach me what God's Mind is, but that which gives me *sufficient* Ground to believe that what it teaches is the Mind of God. When therefore I read the *Scripture*, and find such a Proposition plainly asserted in it, is this a *sufficient* Ground or no for me to believe it to be the Mind of God? If it be, then the Authority of *Scripture* is a *sufficient* Ground for my Belief; if it be not, then the *Scripture* cannot teach me what God's Mind is, because it cannot give me *sufficient* Ground to believe any *one* Proposition in it to be the Mind of God. We are told indeed, that we are not to receive the Sense of the *Scripture* from the *Scripture*, but from the *Church*, who alone hath Authority to Expound it to us, and whose Expositions in all Matters of Faith are *infallible*. But if this be so, to what end should we read the *Scripture*, seeing the only End of Reading is to learn the Sense of what we read, which according to this Principle is not to be learnt from *Scripture*? So that though there be no other *wise* End of reading the *Scripture*, but only to learn from it what it means, yet it seems for Men to read it for this End is a *perfect* Labour in Vain; seeing it is not from the *Scripture* but from the *Church* that they are to learn the Meaning of *Scripture*. For as for the *Scripture*, if these Men are to be believed, it is nothing but a heap of *unsensed Characters*; so they expressly term it: But what do they mean by it? Is it that the *Scripture* consists of a Company of Letters, and Syllables, and Words, that carry with them no *determinate* Sense, that God Almighty hath written and published a Book to the World that means nothing? If so, then when the *Church* by its *infallible* Authority pretends to expound the *Scripture*, Her meaning is not to expound the Sense of it, but to impose a Sense on it which was never in it; For how can She expound the Sense of a Book which hath no Sense in it? If the *Church* is to expound the Sense of *Scripture*, the *Scripture* must have a *certain determinate* Sense in it before She expounds it: for to expound the Sense of *that* which hath no Sense, is Nonsense: And if the *Scripture* hath a *certain* Sense in it antecedently to the *Church's* Exposition of it, why do they call it a parcel of *unsensed Characters*? If their Meaning be only this, that the Sense of *Scripture* as it is delivered in *Scripture*, is so *obscure* and *ambiguous*, that without the *infallible* Exposition of the *Church*, we can never be *certain* what it is; besides, that this is notoriously *false*, the *Scripture* in all *necessary* Points both of Faith and Manners, being so *very plain* and *clear*, that any Man that reads it with an *unprejudiced* Mind, may be as *certain* of the Sense of it, as he can be of the Sense of any Writing, and consequently of the Sense of any *written* Exposition of the *Church*; besides this, I say, it is *evident*, that whatever these Men pretend, it is not merely because of the *obscurity* of *Scripture* that they oblige Men to ground their Faith upon the *Church*, and not upon the *Scripture*. For they own as well as we, that in many Things the *Scripture* is *very plain* and *clear*, and yet they will by no means allow Men to ground their Belief of these things upon the Authority of *Scripture*, but all must be resolved into the Authority of the *Church*. By which it is evident, That if all the *Scripture* were as *plain* as the *plainest* Scriptures, they would still contend for the Necessity of Mens relying upon the *Church*, and not upon the *Scripture*; and consequently that the *true* Reason why they contend for it, is not because the *Scripture* is *obscure*, but because they are resolved to advance their *Church's* Authority. We own as well as they, that where the *Scripture* is *obscure*,
Men

Men ought to be guided by the Authority of the *Church*, which we freely allow to be the *best* Expounder of *Scripture*. But the *true State* of the Difference between *them* and *us*, is this, That whereas we require *plain* Men to judge of *plain* Things with their *own* Understandings, and all Men so far forth as they are *capable*, to judge for themselves in Matters of *Religion*, and not content themselves to see with the *Church's* Eyes, where they are able to see with their *own*; nothing will satisfy these Men, but to have all Men, as well *wise* as *simple*, surrender up their Faith and Judgment to the *Church*, and wink *hard*, and believe whatever the *Church* believes, purely because the *Church* believes it. Whatever they pretend therefore, the Truth of the Case is this; They will by no means allow us to believe upon the Authority of *Scripture*; not because the *Scripture* is *obscure*, (tho' this they pretend; for were it never so *plain*, the Case would be the same) but because they are *sensible* that this will inevitably subvert their *usurped* Dominion over the Faith and Consciences of Men. But we must believe upon the Authority of the *Church*; And who is this *Church*, I beseech you? Why they themselves are this *Church*. So that whereas God hath published a Book called the *Bible*, on purpose to declare his Mind and Will to the World, here are started up a Sort of Men that call themselves the *Church*, who very gravely tell us; *Sirs, You must not so much as look into this Book, or if you do, must not believe any one Word in it upon its own Credit and Authority. For though we do confess it is the Word of God, yet we are the sole Judges of the Sense of it; and therefore whatsoever we declare is its Sense, how unlikely soever it may seem to you, you are bound in Conscience to receive and believe it for this very Reason, because we declare it. In short, you must resign up your Eyes, your Faith, your Reason, and Understandings to us, and see only with our Eyes, and believe only with our Faith, and judge only with our Judgment; and whithersoever we shall think fit to lead you, you must tamely follow us, without presuming to examine whether we lead you right or wrong.* But yet after all, to induce us thus to enslave our Understandings to them they themselves are fain to appeal to *Scripture*, and allow us in some Things to judge of the Sense of it, and to believe those Things upon its Authority. For no *wise* and *honest* Man will ever believe either that they are the *Church*, or the *infallible* Judges of the Sense of *Scripture*, without some Proof and Evidence; and for this they are fain to produce several Texts of *Scripture*, such as, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church*. Now supposing that to be *true*, which is notoriously *false*, viz. that those Texts do necessarily imply that They are the only *true Catholick Church*, and that as such they are constituted by God *infallible* Judges of *Scripture*; yet before I can believe so, I must judge for my self whether this be the Sense of them or no; and if I judge it is, I must believe that they are the *Church*, and *infallible* upon the *Scripture's* Authority and not theirs; for their Authority is the Thing in debate, and I cannot believe upon it before I believe it. So then, though we must believe nothing else upon *Scripture* Authority, yet upon this very Authority we must believe that they are the *Church*, and that they are *infallible*, which are the *fundamental* Principles of their *Religion*; that is to say, we must believe as much upon *Scripture* Authority as will serve their turn, and no more. But may I be *certain* of the Truth of these two *Fundamental* Principles upon *Scripture* Authority, or no? If I may, why may I not as well be *infallibly certain* upon the same Authority of other Principles of *Christianity* as well as those, seeing there are no *common* Principles of *Christian Religion* but what are at least as plainly revealed in *Scripture* as these. But this will spoil all; for if Men may be *infallibly certain* of the Principles of *Religion* upon *Scripture* Authority, what will become of the Necessity of Mens relying upon the *Church*, which is founded upon this Principle that Men can arrive at no *infallible* Certainty in *Religion* by relying upon the Authority of *Scripture*, or indeed any other Authority but the *Church's*? But if I cannot be *infallibly certain* of those two Principles, viz. that they are the *Church*, and *Infallible*, by those Authorities of *Scripture* which they urge to prove them, how can I be *infallibly certain*

certain of any Thing that they declare and define? For if I am not *certain* that they are the *Church*, for all I know the *Church* may be *infallible*, and yet they may be mistaken; and if I am not *certain* that they are *infallible*, for all I know they may be the *Church*, and yet still be mistaken. In short, no Authority can render me infallibly *certain*, but that which is *infallible*; no *Infallibility* can render me infallibly *certain*, but that of which I have an *infallible* Certainty. Either therefore the *Scripture* can render me infallibly *certain* of the *Infallibility* of their *Church*, (and if it cannot, I am sure nothing can) or it cannot; if it can, why may it not as well render me infallibly *certain* of other Principles of *Christianity* which are at least as plainly revealed in it as that? If I cannot, how can I be infallibly *certain* that any Thing she defines and declares to me is true? If then the Authority of *Scripture* can give us an *infallible* Certainty, we have as *just* a Pretence to it as they, it being upon this Authority that we ground our Faith; if it cannot, neither they nor we can justly pretend to it; because they cannot otherwise be infallibly *certain* of their own *Infallibility* but by *Scripture*. But the Truth of it is, *God* never intended either that *they* or *we* should be infallibly *certain* in the Matters of our *Religion*; for after all the means of Certainty that he hath given us he still supposes that we may err, and plainly tells us that there must be *Heresies*, and that even from among the Members of the *true Church*, where *infallible* Certainty is (if it be any where) there should arise *false Teachers* who should bring in *damnable Doctrines*; which could never have happened if he had left any such Means to his *Church* as should render her Children infallibly *certain*. All that he designed was to leave us such *sufficient* Means of Certainty in *Religion*, as that we might not err either dangerously or damnably without *our own* Fault. He hath left us his Word, and in that hath plainly discovered to us all that is *necessary* for us to believe in order to *eternal* Life. He hath left us a *standing* Ministry in his *Church* to explain his Word to us, and to guide us in the Paths of Righteousness and Truth; but still he requires us to search the *one*, and attend to the *other*, with *honest*, *humble*, and *teachable* Minds; and if we do not, we may err not only dangerously but damnably, and it is but *fit* and *just* we should. But if we diligently search the *Scripture*, and faithfully rely upon its Authority, without doing of which we search it in vain; if we sincerely attend to the *publick* Ministry, with Minds prepared to receive the Truth in the Love of it; though we may possibly err in Matters of *less* Moment, yet as to all Things *necessary* to our *eternal* Salvation our Faith shall be inviolably secured; and this is as much as any *honest* Man needs, or as any *honest Church* can promise.

2. From hence also I infer that in the Matters of our Faith and *Religion*, *God* doth expect that we should make use of *our own* Reason and Judgment. For to what end should he put us upon searching the *Scriptures*, but that thereby we may inform our selves what those Things are which he hath required us to believe and practise? But if it were his Mind that we should wholly rely upon the Authority of our *Church*, or of our *spiritual Guides*, and submit our Faith to their Dictates without any Examination, what a *needless* and *impertinent* Employment would this be for us, to search and consult the *Scriptures*? Consult them, for what, if we are not to follow their Guidance and Direction, and to take the Measures of our Faith and Manners from them? And if for this End *God* hath obliged us to consult them (as to be sure it can be for no *other* End) then he hath obliged us to employ *our own* Reason and Judgment, to consider what they say, and enquire what they mean; otherwise he hath obliged us to consult them to no Purpose. It is as evident therefore that *God* will have us use *our own* Reason and Judgment in discerning what we are to believe, and what not, in *Religion*, and not *lazily* rely upon *others* to see and discern, and believe for us, as it is that he would have us search and consult the *Scriptures*; and that I think is evident enough, from what hath been said, to any one that is not resolved to

admit of a Conviction. And indeed seeing our Reason is the *noblest* Faculty we have, it would be very strange if *God* should not allow it to intermeddle in the *highest* and most *important* Affair wherein he hath ingaged us ; and seeing it is our Reason only that renders us *capable* of *Religion*, what an *odd* Thing would it be for *God* to forbid us making use of our Reason in the most *important* Concerns of *Religion*, that is, in distinguishing what is *true Religion* from what is *false*, and what we ought to believe from what we ought to reject ? I know it is pretended by those who urge the *absolute* Necessity of submitting our Reason to the *Church*, that they allow Men to make use of their *own* Reason and Judgment in discovering which the *true Church* is, and that all they contend for is only this, that when once Men have found the *true Church* they ought to enquire no farther, but immediately to deliver up their Reason and Understanding to it, and believe every Thing it believes, without any farther Examination. So that before Men come into their *Church*, it seems they are allowed to see for themselves, but after they are *in*, they must wink and follow their Guides, and depute them to see and understand for them ; which, to such Men as are not quite *sick* of their *own* Reason and Understandings, should methinks be a great Temptation to keep them out of their *Church* for ever : For if I may judge for my self while I am *out* of it, but must not while I am *in* it, I must be very *fond* of parting with my *own* Eyes and Reason if ever I come *into* it at all. But suppose I was always *in* it, and had been bred *up* in its Communion from my Infancy, will they allow me when I come to the *full* use of my Reason fairly to question whether theirs be the only *true Church* or no, and to hear the Reasons, and examine the *Scriptures*, and consult the Doctors on both sides ? No, by no means ; this I am forbid under the Penalty of being deprived of the Benefit of *Priestly Absolution*. So that in short, they will allow me to make use of my Reason if I have been bred an *Heretick* in order to my Reconciliation to their *Church*, but if I have never been an *Heretick* I must never use my Reason to examine the Truth either of my *Church* or *Religion* ; that is to say, I may use my Reason when there is no *other* Remedy, and I must continue a *Heretick* if I do not : But it were much better that I had never had Occasion to use my Reason at all. So that according to these Men the Use of our Reason in *Religion* is only the *least* of two Evils ; it is not so *bad* as to continue a *Heretick*, but if I had never been one it would be very *bad*, and a *certain* Way to make me one ; which methinks looks very *odd*, that the Use of my Reason should be *necessary* to reduce me from *Heresy*, and the disuse of it as *necessary*, when I am reduced, to preserve me from relapsing into *Heresy*. 'Tis a memorable Passage of the *Bishop of St. Mark* in the *Council of Trent*, that *Seculars* are *obliged* humbly to obey that *Doctrine of Faith* which is given them by the *Church*, without disputing or thinking farther of it. Where by the *Church* he means the *Clergy* assembled in that *Council*. So that according to this Man's Doctrine the Faith of the *People* is a *meer* Beast of Burthen, that *right* or *wrong* must bear all the Load that the *Priests* shall agree to lay upon it ; and though it should feel it self oppressed by them with never such *gross* Contradictions or Absurdities, it must think no farther of it, but tamely trudge on without starting or bogling. At this Rate what Tricks may not the *Priests* play with the Faith of the *People* ? Let them invent what Doctrines they please to serve the Interest of their *own* Ambition and Covetousness, the *People* must believe them without asking *why* ; or if they should ask *why*, they must expect no *other* Answer but this, because we have thought fit to define and declare them. For it is by no means *allowable* that the *People* should exercise any *private* Judgment of their *own*, about Matters of Faith ; no, I confess it is not, where the Matters proposed to their Faith are *false* and *erroneous* ; because it is a *thousand* to one but *one* time or *other* the *People* will discover the Frauds and Impostures of the *Priests*, and this would spoil all. But if the Matters of Faith are *true*, in all Probability the farther the *People* enquire into them the better they will be satisfied about them ; and if in the

Exercise

Exercise of their *private* Judgments they should in some *particulars* err, that is far more *tollerable* than that they should be utterly deprived of the means of being able to give an Answer to every one that asks them a Reason of the Hope that is in them. But when *God* hath given the People *reasonable* Faculties on purpose that by them they may be able to distinguish what is *true* from what is *false*, for any Party of Men to forbid them the Use of these Faculties in distinguishing what is *true* from what is *false* in *Religion*, in which above all Things they are most highly concerned, it is a most *injurious* Usurpation upon the *common* Rights of *humane* Nature. For by this Means our *best* Faculty is rendered *useless* to us in our *greatest* Concerns; and whereas *God* gave it to us on purpose to guide and direct us, we are utterly deprived of it's Guidance where we have most need of it, and where it will prove most *fatal* to us if we should happen to err and go astray.

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DIS-

DISCOURSE XXVI.

UPON,

1 TIMOTHY i. 19.

Holding Faith, and a good Conscience; which some having put away, concerning Faith have made shipwreck.



THESE Words are a Part of St. Paul's Charge to his Son Timothy, wherein he Pathetically Exhorts him as a *Valiant Bishop*, to take all possible Care to preserve the Purity of the Christian Doctrine in his Diocess of Ephesus, which at that time abounded with *false Teachers*, whose Business it was to sow the Tares of Heresy and *false Doctrine* in that *large and fruitful Field*, the Cultivation whereof St. Paul had committed to his Charge. And that he might discharge this Office the more effectually, the *Apostle* warns him in the *first Place* to take Care of himself, that he did not suffer *his own Faith and Manners* to be depraved and corrupted by those *lewd and irreligious Principles* which those *Antichristian Seminaries* were then scattering among his People; that so he might be an Example to his Flock, as well as a Teacher of *pure and undefiled Religion*. And this, v. 18. he presses upon him from the Consideration of what had been foretold of him by *Divine Inspiration*, before ever he entered upon his Ministry, viz. That he should war a good warfare, that is, prove a *constant and courageous Champion* of the Christian Faith; which Prophecies, he exhorts him to use his *utmost endeavour* to verify both in his Profession and Practice, *by holding*, or as it is in the Original, *ἔχων, having*, or *keeping Faith and a good Conscience*; which latter, viz. a good Conscience, some having put away, concerning the former, viz. Faith, have made shipwreck.

Before we proceed to the Design of these Words, it will be necessary briefly to explain some Terms in them; as,

1. What is meant by *Faith*.
2. What by a *good Conscience*.
3. What by putting away a *good Conscience*: And,
4. What by making *shipwreck of the Faith*.

1. As for the *first*, What is here meant by *keeping the Faith*? I answer, By this Phrase *Faith*, we are to understand the *Christian Creed*, or summary of those *necessary and essential Doctrines* whereof the *Christian Religion* is composed: For at that time there was *little else* professed and taught in the *Christian Churches*, but

but only the *fundamental* Principles of *Christianity*, together with the *nearest* and most *immediate* Inferences from them; so that few then mis-believed but such as mis-believed in *Fundamentals*, and every Error in Doctrine was generally a Heresy. The *Christian* Faith in those Days lay within a *narrow* compass, and so it continued till the Wantonness and Curiosity of *succeeding* Ages started *disputable* Opinions, and as they prevailed, *adopted* them into the Family of Faith; inasmuch, that in process of Time, *sundry* Opinions were received, that were never so much as heard of, in the *Apostolical* Age; and as soon as they were received, they were presently declared necessary Articles. And as for the *contradictory* Opinions, though *Christianity* was little or nothing concerned whether they were *true* or *false*; yet they seldom underwent any *milder* Name than *Heresy*, or gentler Doom than Damnation; which hath been one of the *grand* Occasions of all the Ruptures and Divisions that have happened in the *Christian* World. But as for the Faith which the *Apostle* here speaks of, it was of a much *less* Bulk than what it is now arrived to by rolling through the *wild* Opiniary of *Sixteen* Disputation Ages, which by degrees have swelled it from a *short* script into a *large* Volume. For if we look into the *New Testament*, and into the Writings of the most *Primitive* Fathers, we shall find the Sums of *Christian* Faith therein contained, consisting of very *few* Articles, and those such only as are *essential* to *Christian Religion*, and such as wherein almost all the *differing* Persuasions of *Christians* do to this Day concenter. To hold the Faith therefore is to persevere immovably in the Profession of the *true Christian* Doctrine, so far as in us lies, and not to be prevailed upon to desert or forsake it, either through *Fear* of Persecution, or *Hope* of *Temporal* Advantage, or the *Knaveish* Arts and *Sly* Insinuations of *false* Teachers.

2. The *second* Term here to be explained, is, What is meant by keeping a *good Conscience*? Conscience in general is nothing but our *practical* Judgment directing us what we ought to *do*, and what to *avoid*, and *approving* or *reproving*, according as we follow its Directions, or run counter to them. The Conscience therefore is *good* or *bad*, according as the Directions are which it gives for the Government of our Lives and Actions. If our Judgment be *false* and *erroneous*, and directs us to *do* what we ought to *avoid*, or to *avoid* what we ought to *do*, it is a *bad* Conscience, that instead of being a Light to guide our Steps in the Paths of Righteousness, is only a *wandering Night-fire* that leads us into Bogs and Quagmires. As on the contrary, A *good* Conscience is our *practical* Judgment well informed, and truly directing us in the Course of our Actions what we ought to *do*, and what to *avoid*: For a *good* Conscience is the *true* Echo of *God* within us, that faithfully resounds his Voice, and upon all Opportunities of Action, repeats after him to our Wills and Affections. To keep a *good* Conscience therefore implies *two* Things:

First, To maintain in our Minds a *true* Sense of *Good* and *Evil*, and so far forth as in us lies, to preserve our *practical* Judgment *pure* from all *false* Principles of Action, and not to suffer either our *vicious* Inclinations or *worldly* Interest to warp and seduce it, and cause it to mistake *Evil* for *Good*, and *Good* for *Evil*.

Secondly, It implies our following the Dictates and Directions of a *good* Conscience, our doing what it *bids*, and abstaining from what it *forbids*, and faithfully resigning our selves to its Conduct and Government, and not to be prevailed upon by any Temptation whatsoever to act counter to its Sense and Persuasion. In short, To keep a *good Conscience* is to live in a *strict* Conformity to the Dictates of a *well-informed* Judgment, and not to allow our selves in any Course of Action which this Vice God within us forbids or disapproves.

3. The

3. The *Third* Term to be explained in the Text, is, What is meant by *putting away a good Conscience*; which being directly opposed here to keeping a *good Conscience*, must denote the Contraries to it. To put away a *good Conscience* therefore is either,

First, To corrupt *our own* Judgment of Things and Actions out of *vicious* Affection or *worldly* Interest, and impose upon our selves *false* Notions of *Good* and *Evil*; Or,

Secondly, To act directly contrary to our Sense and Persuasion; to leave *undone* those Things which *our own* Conscience tells us we ought to *do*, and to *do* those Things which it tells us we ought not to *do*. In short, To put away a *good Conscience*, is to live in any *known* Course of Sin, either of *Omission* or *Commission*; to practise Contradictions to *our own* Judgments, and to follow the Inclinations of our Wills against the Light and Conviction of our Consciences.

4. The *last* Enquiry, is, What is here meant by making *shipwreck of the Faith*? Which being here set in Opposition to *holding or keeping the Faith*, must signify oppositely, and consequently must denote not holding and keeping it; or which is the same Thing, losing and abandoning it: For in this *Allegory*, the *true Christian* Faith is represented as a Ship, and a *good Conscience*, or a *pure and holy* Life, as the Pilot, that steers and governs it. And indeed, in that State of Things there was no *other* Pilot, but Purity of Conscience and Holiness of Life was able to conduct and preserve this Ship, and carry it *safe* through those *incessant* Storms of Persecution, wherein at that time it was tossed and agitated. For when *Christians* have once thrown off the Obligations of a *good Conscience*, by abandoning themselves to a *wicked* and *dissolute* Life, What is there left to restrain them from abandoning their Faith when it stands in Competition with their *Worldly* Ease and Interest? And though there should be no Competition between their Faith and Interest, but they might freely enjoy them both without any Disturbance; yet their *wicked* Lives will naturally tempt them to corrupt their Faith with *wicked* Principles; of which *latter* in the next Verse, he gives an *eminent* Instance in *Hymenæus*, who had not wholly deserted *Christianity*, but only renounced *one Fundamental* Article of it, *viz.* The Resurrection of the Dead: As of the *former*, he gives *another* Instance in *Alexander*, who as it seems probable, had through the Fear of Persecution deserted *Christianity* it self.

The Words thus explained, may be resolved into this Sense, *That Mens living wickedly against the Convictions and Obligations of their Conscience, doth very much expose them to Apostacy from true Religion into gross and impious Errors.* Thus to the love of Money, which is the root of all evil, the *Apostle* attributes Mens erring from the Faith, 1 Tim. 6. 10. And that which exposed those *filthy Women*, 2 Tim. 3. 6. to the Seduction of *false* Teachers, was their being laden with Sins, and led away with *divers* Lusts. And the same *Apostle* ascribes *Demas's* Apostacy to his Covetousness, or *inordinate Love of this present World*, 2 Tim. 4. 10. But that I may evince this Truth more fully, I shall give you some *particular* Instances of the *mighty* Tendencies there are in every *vicious* Course of Life to Error and Apostacy from *true Religion*.

1. It corrupts and debauches Men's Reason and Understanding.
2. It renders the Principles of *true Religion* uneasy to their Minds.

3. It

3. It deprives Men of the *highest* Encouragements to Constancy and Stedfastness in Religion.

4. It weakens the *natural* Force of their Consciences, which is the *greatest* Restraint from Apostacy.

5. It strengthens the Temptations to Apostacy.

6. It provokes God to give us up to the Power of Delusion.

1. Living in any *known* and *willful* Course of Sin, corrupts and debauches Mens Reason and Understandings. So long as a Man lives in any *known* Sin he doth not only live without, but against his Reason, which instead of being the Guide of his Actions, hath nothing at all to do with them, but like an *idle* Spectator, doth only behold the *brutish* Scene without any Part or Concern in it. And whilst a Man thus abandons himself to the Government of his own *blind* Will, and lives not only in the *perpetual* Neglect, but Contempt of his Reason, it is impossible for him not to waste and impair it. For as our *rational* Faculties are improved and perfected by Exercise, so they naturally languish and decay, through Difuse and Inactivity; and consequently the *less* Use we make of them in the Government of our Lives and Actions, which is their *proper* Office and Employment, like *standing* Waters they must corrupt and putrify. And indeed there is no *impure* Lust but doth by its own *natural* Efficacy disable Mens Reason and Understanding: For while we are in these Bodies, our Mind is fain to work by *bodily* Instruments, and to make Use of *Brains*, and *Blood*, and *Spirits*, in all its Operations; and according as their Temper is *good* or *bad*, its Operations will be *more* or *less* perfect: But while a Man indulges himself in any *impure* Affection, that will naturally distemper these Organs of his Mind, and indispose them for the Use of his Reason. For so Madness, which is such a Distemperature of the *Brain*, and *Blood*, and *Spirits* as doth wholly alienate them from the Use of Reason and Discourse, is usually found to be the Effect of some *wild* and *extravagant* Affection, such as *Pride*, or *Covetousness*, *Anger*, or *Fearfulness*, *Jealousy*, or *Lust*; and if these Passions, being once arrived to their *utmost* Rage and Excess, do so often run into *down-right* Madness and Distraction, to be sure every *inordinate* Degree of them must be a Tendency towards it, a *great* Disturbance of Mind, though not a *total* Distraction; and how much they exceed their *due* Bounds and Measures, by so much they must taint and vitiate these *necessary* Instruments of our Mind and Reason. Thus every *inordinate* Lust doth by a *natural* Influence disturb Mens Reason, and sully the clearness of their *discerning* Faculties. So that what *Clearness* is to the Eye of the Body, that *Purity* from *vicious* Affection is to the Eye of the Mind; it brightens its Apprehensions, and renders its Conceptions of Things more *quick*, *distinct*, and *vigorous*: Whereas on the contrary, all *disorderly* Affection doth *more* or *less* cloud and disturb the Brain, chill or inflame the Spirits, hurry them into *tumultuous* Motions, or render them *listless* and *unactive*; by which *continual* Disorders, our *discerning* Faculties must by Degrees be extremely weakened and confounded. And whilst the Mind is thus *lost* in the Fogs of *inordinate* Affection, it is an *easy* Matter to seduce and mislead it, it being through the Dimness of its Sight apt to be imposed upon by *false* Colours, and tinged with Prejudice and *undue* Apprehensions of Things. *Weak* Minds are easily abused, especially in Matters of Religion, which being placed beyond the Prospect of Sense, require a *severer* Attention in order to the forming of *right* Apprehensions concerning them; and therefore the *more* Men weaken their Understandings by their Lusts, the *more* they must be exposed to Errors and Delusions. But then,

2. Living

2. Living in any *known* Course of Sin, renders the Principles of *true Religion* uneasy to Mens Minds. Whilst a Man leads a *wicked* Life, his *Religious* Principles, if they are *pure* and *true*, will perpetually reprove and upbraid him: For there are no Contraries in Nature more *irreconcilable* to one another than *true Faith* and *bad Manners*; the *great Design* of all *true Faith* being to move and persuade Men to abstain from all Ungodliness, and *to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*. If therefore a Man's Faith be *true* and *genuine*, he cannot live wickedly without acting against the *full Persuasion* of his *own Mind*, which must necessarily render him very *uneasy*; for in this State of Things he acts with a *self condemning* Judgment, and every Compliance with his Inclination sets him at odds with his Reason; all the while he is meditating any *wicked Design*, he struggles with his Conscience, and confronts and outrages his *own Convictions*; and when he hath acted it, every Reflection he makes on it is a *bitter* Invektive against himself: Thus so long as the Principles of *true Religion* possess his Mind, he finds himself continually hagg'd and oppressed by them; they sit as an *uneasy Load* upon his Soul, and will not suffer him to Sin in quiet, but perpetually cause his *sinful Delights* to go off with an *ungrateful Farewel*, and recoil upon him in many a *sickly Qualm* and *Convulsion*. In which State of Things he hath no *other Remedy*, but either to forsake his Principles, or his Lusts; or to live in *perpetual Variance* with himself; and therefore, if he still resolve to Sin on, in all Probability he will soon grow quite weary of *true Religion*, and quit his Mind as soon as possibly he can of those *stern* and *inflexible* Principles which create these Discords in his Breast. And whilst he is in this Temper it will be an *easy* matter to pervert him to any *Religion* that will give Ease to his *strait-laced* Conscience, and cast a more *favourable Aspect* on his Lust; For being resolved to follow his *vicious* Inclinations he now sees through them, and understands by them; and whilst his Mind runs upon the *false Bias* of his Lusts, that *Religion* which is most *grateful* to them will seem most *reasonable* to him. Shew him a way how he may worship God acceptably without the Expence of a *strict* Attention, and the *inward* Devotion of a *pure Heart*, and *heavenly Affections*; merely by numbring so many Prayers on a String of Beads, by seeing a Priest act over such a Set of Ceremonies, and hearing him in *varied* Tones sometimes pronounce, and sometimes murmur a *Form of Words* in an *unknown Language*; and though at first view it may seem very *absurd* to him, yet the very Looseness and Carnality will be apt to engage his Affections to it, and then they by degrees will go near to wheedle his Understanding into a more *favourable* Opinion of it. Propose to him an Expedient how he may go to *Heaven* at last without undergoing the Severities of a *sincere* Repentance and Amendment; tell him there is a *certain Church* in the World, whose Priests, if he confess his Sins to them with any Degree of Sorrow and Remorse, have *full Power* to Pardon and Absolve him; so that if he do but take Care not to die without Confession, however he lives, he cannot miscarry for ever. He may indeed go into a very *hot* Place called *Purgatory*, and there suffer a while very *grievous* Things before he get to *Heaven*; but if instead of parting with his Lusts while he lives, he will part with his Money when he dies, he may at *easy Rates* purchase of that *Church* such a Number of *Masses*, *Requiem*s, and *Indulgencies*, as will in all Probability soon procure his Dismission from those *temporary* Sufferings into *eternal Happiness*: How *oddly* soever this Doctrine may appear to his Reason, to be sure it will be *charming* enough to his Lusts; and when once a Mans Lusts are retained, the Cause is half carried at the Bar of his Judgment. And so in all *other* Instances it is a *great* Disadvantage to *true Religion*, and as *great* an Advantage to *false*, that Mens Faith and Reason are so much swayed and byass'd by their Lusts. For though there is no *Religion* can be *true* but what is *pure* and *holy*, yet it is the Holiness of *true Religion* that doth provoke their Lusts against it, and 'tis their Lusts that do provoke their Reason; and when all is done, there is nothing doth more

more strongly incline, or frequently pervert *depraved* and *wicked* Minds to *false Religion* than its Compliance with their *vicious* Affections, tho' this very Thing is one of the most *certain* Signs in Nature of its Falseness.

3. Living in any *known* Course of Sin deprives Men of the *greatest* Encouragements to Constancy and Stedfastness in the *true Religion*: For doubtless the *highest* Encouragement to Perseverance in the Truth against all Oppositions and Temptations, is the Hope of those *glorious* Rewards that await them in the World to come. 'Twas this that guarded the Faith of the *ancient* Martyrs safe through all the Rage and Cruelty of their Persecutors, their having an Eye to the Recompence of Reward, the Sight of which inspired the *drooping* Souls with an *invincible* Courage; made them despise *Racks*, and *Wheels*, and *Flames*, and exalt and triumph under the most *exquisite* Torments. And indeed what *less* Encouragement than the Hope of being eternally *happy* within a *few* Moments could have enabled a Company of *tender* Virgins, *delicate* Matrons, *infirm* and *aged* Bishops to endure those *long* and *dolorous* Martyrdoms, as many times they did, when their Tormentors took their turns, from Morn to Night, and plyed them with all kinds of Tortures till oftentimes they were forced to give over, and confess themselves overcome either through Weariness or Compassion? But now by indulging our selves in any *known* Course of Sin we throw away this *Sovereign* Cordial, and leave our selves *naked* and *destitute* of all the *mighty* Supports it is able to give us under any Temptation to Apostacy. For how can we hope for any Good from *God*, and much *less* for so great a Good as a *Heaven* of *immortal* Joys amounts to, whilst we persist in *open* Rebellion against him; especially when he hath expressly suspended this *mighty* Recompence upon our *constant* and *faithful* Obedience to his Will, and told us plainly before-hand, that we might know what to trust to, that if we fail of *this* he will be so far from admitting us into that Place and State of Blessedness, that he will banish us *for ever* from his Presence into *outer* Darkness, and *eternal* Wretchedness and Despair? When by *wilful* Sin therefore we have cast away our hope of Heaven, what have we left to support our Constancy to the Truth, if ever we should be called to suffer for it? How can it be expected that rather than renounce our *Religion*, we should be contented to part with our *Goods*, or *Liberties*, or *Lives*, when all our Hope is shut up in this Life, and we have no Prospect of Compensation either *here* or *hereafter*? If ever therefore we would be *stedfast* to the Truth against all Temptations, we must above all Things take Care by a *holy* Life to cherish and keep alive the Hopes of *Heaven* in our Breasts, which is the only Anchor that can hold and secure us in a *stormy* Sea from making Shipwreck of our Faith.

4. Living in any *known* Course of Sin weakens the *natural* Force of Mens Consciences, which is the *greatest* Restraint from Apostacy. Indeed for Men to *apostatize* from their *Religion* to secure their *worldly* Interest is a Thing so *base* and *infamous*, so *foul* an Instance of a *cowardly*, *degenerous*, and *prostitute* Soul, that if a Man were under no *other* Restraint but only that Sense of Honour that is lodged in all *brave* Minds, he would scorn so *mean*, so *poor* a Condescension. But yet when all is done, there is no such *powerful* Restraint upon Men as that of a *good* Conscience, which is the *natural* Bridle by which *God* curbs our *headstrong* Nature, and keeps it from flying out into all the *wild* Extravagancies it is inclined to. For it is from *God* and in *God's* stead that Conscience acts, who is the most *powerful* Being in the World: When it *commands*, it is with *God's* Authority; when it *rebukes*, it is with *God's* Majesty; when it *applauds*, it is with *God's* Complacency: It proceeds not upon Principles of *mere* Policy or Prudence, which require us to act this way *now*, and *anon* the contrary, as Circumstances alter; but upon the *awful* Principles of Divinity, which oblige us by all that we can hope or fear *for ever*, and require of us the self same Things and Actions in all Circumstances; and the *sole* Reason it insists on is the Will of *God*, whose Pleasure or Displeasure can make us *happy* or *miserable* for ever. The Voice of Conscience is not, *This I judge most expedient for thee to do, and this to avoid, but*

this thou must do, and this avoid, as thou tenderest the Love of God and darest his everlasting Hatred and Revenge : And it is no less than *eternal* Bliss that Conscience allures our Hope with, and *eternal* Vengeance that it alarms our Fear with ; and if Men will not be withheld by such *powerful* Restraints as these, what can withhold them ? Whilst therefore a Man cherishes his Conscience by complying with it, and follows its Directions, this, if any Thing, will secure his steadfastness to the Truth against all Temptations ; whilst this hath any Power over him, he will as soon eat Fire as *sacrifice* his Faith to his Interest. For, for a Man to renounce his *Religion* upon any Prospect of *temporal* Gain or Loss, is such a *flagitious* Violation of all that is *Sacred*, such a *monstrous* Instance of *High Treason* against *God*, such an *open* Blasphemy of his Truth, such a *bold* Defiance of his Majesty ; and in a word, such a Complication of *vile* Perfidy, *base* Ingratitude, and *impious* Falsehood, that but to think of it is like looking down from a *stupendous* Precipice, that swims the Head, and strikes the Mind with Horror and Amazement ; so that while a Man's Conscience hath any Power over him, he will no more be able to prevail with himself to commit the *one*, than to throw himself headlong down from the *other*, whilst he is under the Horror of the Prospect ; and he will find it so much more *easy* to endure the worst of Persecutions, than to commit such an Outrage and Violence on his Conscience, and undergo those *horrible* Reflections and *stinging* Remorses that must follow it : But after a Man by wilful *sinning*, hath often wounded his Conscience, the *natural* Tenderness of it will by Degrees wear off, till at length it grows quite *callous* and *insensible*. For what is reported of *Metbridates*, that by often drinking of Poison, he had so *familiarized* it to his Constitution, that at length it sat quietly on his Stomach, and gave him no Disturbance, is true of Conscience, which at first recoils at every *sinful* Potion, and cannot swallow it without suffering *violent* Spasms and Convulsions ; but having been a while accustomed to it, it by Degrees grows more and more *natural*, till at length it goes more glibly down without straining, and goes quietly off without Remorse or Reluctance. And when once a Man's Conscience is frozen over by a Custom of Sinning, it will every day grow *harder* and *harder*, and at length be able to bear the *heaviest* Leads of Guilt without Relenting ; and when once Things are reduced to this State, *Good* and *Evil*, *Virtue* and *Vice*, are Things *indifferent* to him, which he chuses or refuses as they come to hand, and are *more* or *less* *subservient* to his *present* Convenience. He can *blaspheme*, and *pray*, *oppress* and *give alms* with the same Unconcernedness of Mind ; and to a *Devil* or the *Saint* are Parts so *indifferent* to him, that he can perform them both with the same Remorselessness. And when a Man is thus got loose from the Restraints of his Conscience there is nothing so *bad* that can come amiss to him. If therefore while he stands in this Posture his *temporal* Interest should chance to beckon him to change the *best Religion* in the World for the *worst* ; to pray to *insensible* Images and *dead* Mens Ghosts instead of the *everlasting God* ; to let go Substances to catch at Shadows and Ceremonies, and to part with the most *rational* Truths for the most *palpable* and *gross* Contradictions ; he hath no Principle in him *strong* enough to withhold him from a *base* Compliance, his Conscience being laid fast asleep, which whilst awake would have trembled at such an *horrid* Proposal. And though by thus prostituting his Faith to his Interest, he at once renounces his *God*, his *Saviour*, and all his Hopes of *future* Immortality ; yet his *insensible* and *remorseless* Heart is no more touch'd or affected with it, than if it were the *slightest* Peccadillo. Thus by letting go a *good Conscience* Men pave themselves an *easy* way to Apostacy from *true Religion*, which otherwise would be one of the most *craggy* and *difficult* Passages in all the High-Way to *Hell*.

5. Living in any *known* Course of Sin doth very much strengthen and enforce the Temptations to Apostacy. He who lives under the Conduct and Government of a *good Conscience*, takes Care to regulate his Affections towards the Things of this World, so, as neither to fear the *Evils* of it *too* much, nor love the

the *Goods* of it too well ; but makes a *just* and *equal* Estimate of both, and by that proportions his Affections towards them ; and he who doth this, disarms them of their *tempting* Power, which is chiefly owing to our selves, and the *false* Estimate we make of them. 'Tis *our own* Imagination that gives Life and Efficacy to the Charms and Terrors of the World, and renders them so *successful* and *victorious* : We fancy *that* to be in them which is not, and so are affected not so much with the Things themselves, as with the *false* Representations that we make of them. But he, who by following the Dictates of a *good Conscience*, hath reduced his *wild* Affections within the Lists of Reason and Sobriety, can from thence despise the World, and maintain his Post against all its Temptations. He loves its *Goods* no better than they deserve, and consequently he loves them not so well as to part with his Virtue, his Innocence, and his Soul for them. He dreads its *Evils* no farther than they are truly *dreadful*, and consequently is fully satisfied, that to Sin is much more *dreadful* than to suffer ; and he hath found by often Experience, that in the *faithful* discharge of his Duty, there is far more *Peace*, more *Joy*, and *Satisfaction* than in all the *vain* Allurements of this World. He hath found another *Heaven* upon Earth, besides these *temporary* Enjoyments ; a *Heaven* within his own Breast composed of *joyous* Hopes, and *blessed* Expectations ; and in this *Heaven* hath often found himself a thousand times more *happy* than among all the Festivities of an *earthly* Paradise ; and therefore knows very well that he is bid to his Loss whenever he is tempted to exchange the *one* for the *other*. He is thoroughly sensible, having already found it to his Smart, that by Sinning he shall sustain a much *heavier* Loss, and expose himself to far more *exquisite* Agonies of Mind than any this World can threaten him withal ; and therefore certainly reckons upon it, that whenever to avoid a Sin he incurs a Suffering, he wisely chooses of *two* Evils the *least*. And while his Soul stands thus affected, it is *shot-proof* against all Temptations, and much more against those Temptations which sollicit him to renounce his *Religion*, and in which he knows by Experience there is far more *Good* than the World can propose to him in Exchange for it. He knows both how *little* the World, and how much *true Religion* is worth ; and having made a *just* Estimate of both, to propose to him any *worldly* Hope as a Price for his Faith, is the same Thing as to offer a Miser Dross for his Gold. His Mind is fixed in this Persuasion, that all the *Michiefs* this World can do him are *inconsiderable* to one who must live *for ever* in *another* unspeakably *happy* or *miserable* ; and therefore to threaten him into Apostacy with any *worldly* Fear, is to attempt to blow up a Rock of Marble with a Squib of Wild fire. But when once a Man hath taken off the Restraints of his Conscience from his *wild* Affections, and let them loose to the World, they will aid and assist its Temptations against him, and animate them with a thousand times more Life and Vigour than is in their *own* Natures. For as for the *Goods* of this World, they can never bewitch us as they do, did we not give a Dress to them ; we paint their Faces, and varnish them over with an *artificial* Beauty, and then fall in Love with *our own* Fucus ; and so much as we value and affect them beyond their *natural* Worth, so much Power we give them to conquer and enslave us. When therefore by leading a *sensual* and *wicked* Life, a Man has wholly devoted himself to the World, he hath put himself into the Worlds Power to be commanded and disposed of as it pleases. And now if any *worldly Good* beckons and invites him, his *mad* Affection will presently hurry him after it, though it be thro' *thick* and *thin*, through the most *flagitious* and *enormous* Courses. If any *worldly Evil* threaten and alarm him, he must immediately fly, though it be from *Virtue* and *Innocence*, from *God* and *Heaven*, and all that is *Sacred* in *Religion*. His Affections have render'd him a *meer* Laquey to the *Goods* and *Evils* that are *without* him, and wherever they send him, he must go, wherever they lead him, he must follow, let their Vagaries be never so *wild* or *wicked*. If therefore, while his Soul is thus enslaved to the World, he should be tempted by him to apostatize from his *Religion*, what hath he to restrain or secure him ? For ever

since he got loose from his Conscience, he is wholly led by his Affections, and these being chained and fastened to the World, hale him after it which way soever it moves. So long as his *Religion* and his *worldly* Interest consist, and go hand in hand, he is very well content to own and follow it; but if ever a Storm or Persecution should part them, in all Probability he will follow his Interest, and like the *treacherous Orpha*, give his Religion a parting Kiss and leave it. For his Heart is now so wedded to the World that he esteems nothing so *good* as its *Goods*, and nothing so *evil* as its *Evils*; and the *one* being his *Heaven*, and the *other* his *Hell*, all other Considerations are overcome by them; and to obtain the *one*, and avoid the *other*, he must stick at nothing, no not at renouncing his *God* and his *Religion*, together with all his *Hopes* of a *future* Immortality.

6. And lastly. Living in any *known* Course of Sin provokes *God* to give us up to the Power of Delusion: For so long as Men submit themselves to the Guidance and Direction of a *good* Conscience, the Spirit of *God*, who is a Spirit of Truth, abides with them, and not only directs their Wills, but also informs their Understandings, and enables them to discern the Beauty and Reality of those *heavenly* Truths, which he hath revealed to us in the *Holy Scriptures*. For tho', since he hath revealed already the whole Will of *God* to us concerning our *eternal* Salvation, we have no Reason to expect that he will reveal *new* Truths to us; yet seeing so far forth, as it is *necessary*, he hath promised and engaged, that he will co operate with us to enable us as well to understand the Will of *God* as to perform it; we have the *greatest* Reason in the World to depend upon it, that so long as we cherish his *heavenly* Inspirations, by yielding to them our *free* and *ready* Compliance, he will be so far an *assisting* Genius to our Understandings, as to suggest to us those Truths which he hath already revealed, and set them before our Eyes in so *fair* a Light, as that we shall not fail more clearly to discern, and more distinctly to apprehend them than otherwise we should or could have done. For when he writes his Truth upon our Minds, it is with such a *Victorious* Sun-beam as will endure neither Cloud nor Shadow before it. Whenever he speaks, he speaks not to our Ears, but to our Minds, and represents Things nakedly and immediately to our Understandings. He converses with our Spirits, as *Spirits* do with *Spirits*, without involving his Sense in *articulate* Sounds or *material* Representations; but objects it to us in its own *naked* Light, and *characterizes* it immediately on our Understandings. And as he proposes the *Divine* Light to us, so he also illuminates our Minds to discern and comprehend it: He raises and exalts our *Intellectual* Powers, and as a *vital* Form to the Light of our Reason, invigorates and actuates it, and thereby renders its Apprehension of Things more *quick*, and *piercing*, and *sagacious*. Thus doth the *Holy Spirit* more or less assist us in the *true* Understanding of Divine Things, as he finds us more or less compliant with his *heavenly* Pleasure; and tho' he stands no more obliged to render our Minds *infallible* than our Wills *impeccable*, yet so long as by our *sincere* Obedience to his *holy* Suggestions, we keep our selves under his Conduct and Direction, we may depend upon it, he will either preserve us from all *dangerous* Errors, or if for *just* Reasons he should permit us to fall into any such, they shall not prove *dangerous* to us, but either we shall be convinced of them while we live, or obtain Pity and Pardon for them when we die. But whilst we persist in any *wilful* Course of Sin, we do not only violate our *own* Conscience, but also repel those *good* Motions of the Spirit of *God*, whereby he strives to reduce and reclaim us; in doing which, we continually grieve him, and if we do not forbear, shall at length provoke him wholly to forsake and abandon us, to give us up to our *own* Hearts Lulls as *desperate* Wretches, with whom he hath hitherto strove and struggled in vain, and of whose *future* Recovery there remains no *farther* Hope or Prospect. And when he hath forsaken us, our Mind will not only be left *naked* and *destitute* of all those Helps and Advantages for the understanding of *Divine* Truths, which it receives from him, but also be exposed to the Cheats and Fallacies of *Evil Spirits*, whose Recreation

on it is to put Tricks upon our Minds ; to banter and play upon our *easy* Faith, to cast Mists before our Eyes, and therein to juggle away all *true Religion* from us, and foist in the Room of it the most *fulsome* Errors and Mistakes. For so the *Apostle* tells us of *Antichrist* the great Deceiver, that he should come with all the *deceivableness of righteousness to them that perish, because they received not the love of truth, that they might be saved.* And that for that Cause, viz. their not receiving the truth in the love of it, God should send them strong delusion that they should believe a lye ; that is, by abandoning them to the Power of cheating and deluding Spirits : That they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness, 2 Thess. 2. 10, 11, 12. And God grant that this at last prove not our Fate, that because we have sinned against the *clearest* Light, and gone astray in all Unrighteousness under the *best* and *purest Religion* in the World, we are not at length given up by God to follow the *wild* Delusions of *Antichrist*, and to believe all those *fulsome* Lyes and Impostures which he from Age to Age hath been imposing upon the World. But whether it prove thus or no, this I am sure of, that by persisting in any *vicious* Course against the Light and Conviction of our Consciences, we highly provoke *Almighty God* to withdraw his Grace from us, and give us up to our own Hearts Lusts ; and when this is done, our own Hearts Lusts will soon betray and give up our Faith to *false* and *vicious* Principles of Religion.

And now having shewn at large what *strong* and *prevalent* Tendencies there are in a *wicked* Life to Apostacy from *true Religion*, I shall conclude this Argument with *two* or *three* Inferences.

1. From hence I infer, What a *great* Malignity there is in Mens being *inconstant* to, and *apostatizing* from the *true Religion* in Compliance with their *sinful* Affections ; it being, as you see, the *ill* Daughter of a *bad* Mother, (a *debauched* and a *dissolute* Conscience) and consequently partaking of all its *natural* Bane and Malignity, even as all other *bad* Effects do of the *malignant* Nature of their *bad* Causes. But the Truth of this will more fully appear by considering the *particular* Evils which Mens Inconstancy to, and Proneness to revolt from the *true Religion* implies ; of which I shall give you these five Instances :

1. The *great* Impiety of it.
2. The *desperate* Folly of it.
3. The *foul* Dishonesty of it.
4. The *shameful* Cowardice of it.
5. The *vast* Hazard and Insecurity of it.

1. Consider the *great* Impiety of it. He who can part with his *Religion*, or any Principle of it, upon any *other* Terms than a *full* Conviction of the *Falseness* of it, is either a *downright* *Atheist*, who believing no *Religion* to be *true*, governs himself by this Principle, That the *wisest* Course is to profess none but that which is uppermost, and most for his Interest ; or a *prophane* and *impious* Wretch, who, though he believes his *own Religion* *true*, exchanges it for *another* which he believes to be *false*, upon no *other* Consideration, but so much *temporal* Advantage to boot : By which he plainly declares that in the Ballance of his Estimation the Odds between *Truth* and *Falseness*, the Declarations of *God*, and the Impostures of the *Devil*, is so *inconsiderable*, that the *least* Addition of the *transitory* Goods of this World to the *latter*, renders it of *sufficient* Weight to turn the Scale against the *former*, and that for his part he is not much concerned whether the *Almighty* be his Friend or Foe ; and provided he may but enjoy his Ease and Pleasure a *few* Years longer here, he is very well contented to part with all his Hopes and Interest in *God* for ever. For this is the *natural* Construction of Mens Apostacy from the *true Religion* in Consideration of their *worldly* Interest, that *that* Interest is in their Esteem far more *eligible* than *God* with all his Power and Goodness, that it is *better* to be without *God* in the World than without Preferment,

ment, and that *that* Man makes a very good Bargain, who gets a good Place in Exchange for his *Maker*, and with the *treacherous Judas* sells his *Saviour*, though it be but for *thirty Pieces of Silver*: Which is such a *monstrous* Degree of Impiety, as one would think, should be sufficient to scare affright and the most *courageous* Sinner that hath but the *least* Apprehension of *God*, or Sense of *Good and Evil*. But then,

2. Consider the *desperate* Folly of Mens abandoning their *Religion* in Compliance with their vicious Affections. For he who without *through* Conviction abandons the Profession of his *Religion*, whether it be *true* or *false*, doth together with that most certainly abandon all the *blessed* Rewards, and incur all the *dreadful* Penalties that *true Religion* promises and denounces, because tho' his *Religion* perhaps may be *false*, yet in renouncing it whilst he believes it *true*, his Will doth as maliciously renounce the *true Religion* as if it really were so. He thought it *true*, and yet renounc'd it; by which he plainly declares that if it had been *true* he would have renounced it; so that whether it be *true* or *false*, it's all one to him, his Will is the *same*, his Crime and Guilt the *same*; it is *true Religion* he intentionally renounces, and therefore in so doing he doth intentionally renounce all his Concern and Interest in *true Religion*. Now what a *desperate* piece of Folly is this for a Man to part with all his Stock in the *Common Bank* of *Religion*, which if it be not a *down right* Sham and Imposture, is of *everlasting* Moment and Concern to him, only for a *present* Gratification of some *vain* and *unreasonable* Lust; to divorce himself *for ever* from the Love of *God*, to quit all Title and Interest in the *precious* Blood of the *Saviour* of the World, only to curry a *short-lived* Favour with Men, with Men whose Breath is in their Nostrils, and who within a few Days or Years must go off the Stage, and leave us here perhaps *forlorn* and *destitute*? To part with all my *glorious* Hopes of *Heaven*, which are my *best* Heaven upon Earth; and which is *worse*, with *Heaven* it self, where I have Treasures of Bliss sufficient to maintain me in a most *happy* Port to *eternal* Ages; only to gain or secure a *transitory* Estate or Preferment, which, while I have, it cannot make me *happy*, and from which e'er long I shall be torn and divided, and not be a Farthing the *better* for *forever*; to expose ones self as a *publick* Spectacle of Scorn and Contempt to God and Angels, and all the *wise* and *good* Part of the *rational* World for a *short* *extemporary* Blaze of *pompous* Splendor and Greatness which lies at the Mercy of every Counter-blast of Fortune, and in all Probability will e'er long expire in *Smoke* and *Stink*, *Wretchedness* and *Infamy*; to plunge ones self headlong into all the Agonies and Torments, the Horrors and Desparations of a *woful* *Eternity*, only to escape a *short* Persecution, and a *glorious* Martyrdom; when a little after perhaps I shall suffer a *great deal more* and *longer* under the *Gout*, *Stone*, or *Strangury*, without the Comfort of dying in a *brave* Cause, and being assured of an *immortal* Recompence than I could have done under the Hand of the Executioner with it? And yet all these *mad* Pranks that Man plays at once, who abandons his *Religion* in Compliance with his Lusts.

3. Consider the *foul* Dishonesty of it: For, besides that our *Religion* being the most *sacred* Pledge committed to us by *God* for our *own* Use, and the Use of our *latest* Posterity, we cannot viciously desert and abandon it without betraying of *God*, and falsifying our Trust to him; and which is *worse*, without squandering away the most *inestimable* Good that ever he committed to Men, upon our own *base* Lusts, and his most *execrable* Enemies, which is Dishonestly blackned with the *foulest* Ingratitude: Besides this, I say, by forsaking our *Religion* in Compliance with any *lewd* Affection, we do not only do a *dishonest* Thing at *present*, but also totally discard the Obligations to Honesty for the *future*: For there is nothing can rationally oblige a Man to be thoroughly *honest* but only his *Religion*, or *inward* Sense that it is his *indispensable* Duty towards *God*, before whose *righteous* Tribunal he must one Day give an Account of all his Actions. The *two great* Motives of *humane* Action are *Religion*, and *worldly* Interest: Now as for *Religion*, that consists of *fix'd* and *unalterable* Principles, which will by no means

means ply or bend to the Alterations of *outward* Affairs and Circumstances; but do in all Conditions move and oblige us with *equal* Force and Vigour; whereas *Worldly* Interest is a *fickle* and *mutable* Thing that varies and alters with every *outward* Turn and Revolution: So that *that* which is my Interest to *Day*, may prove my Damage to *Morrow*; and if it should, whatever Part I act to *Day*, it will oblige me to act the contrary to *Morrow*. When therefore a Man hath let go his *Religion*, and hath nothing but his Interest to hold him, it is *Cross* or *Pile* for the *future*; whether you find him an *Honest* Man or a *Knave*; because from henceforth he will be *Knave* or *Honest* according as it serves his Turn, and that which serves his Turn to *Day* may prove his Loss and Prejudice to *Morrow*; so that whether to *Day* or to *Morrow* he proves a *true* Man or a Cheat, wholly depends upon the *Die* of Fortune, and you must consult his Stars to find the *lucky* Hour or Moment when you may safely trust him. For after the Wretch hath been so *perfidious* as to renounce his *God* and his *Religion*, he hath no *one* Principle remaining in him upon which you can fasten any *lasting* Confidence. As for his Interest, that is such a *fickle* and *inconstant* Thing, that there is no trusting it; if it plead for you *now*, the *next* Turn of Affairs it may be retained against you, and the Man being got loose from all the Ties and Obligations of Fidelity, you may be sure he will stick at nothing but it never so *foul*, that his *present* Interest invites him to serve himself; he will make no Bones, whenever he hath a *fair* Opportunity, to *cheat* and *betray* his own Father; or supplant his *dearest* Friend or Benefactor; and what should hinder him, his Conscience and Religion being gone, and with them all *binding* Principles of Truth and Honesty? For when a Man forsakes his *Religion* out of any *vicious* Affection, he doth in Effect make this publick Declaration to the World; *By this my own Act and Deed I do here for ever renounce all the Obligations to Honesty and fair Dealing with God or Men, and am resolved for the future to be deaf and inexorable to all the Importunities of Conscience and Religion. From henceforth I will listen to no other Call but that of my worldly Interest; when that bids me be honest, I will be honest, and when it bids me play the Knave, I will play the Knave; and therefore for the future I warn all that know me to trust me no farther than they can make it my Interest to be true, and not to venture the most trifling Matter in which they are unwilling to be wronged, either upon my Faith Word or Oath, without demanding of me such ample Securities as may render it impossible for me to wrong them without wronging my self: For this is the Principle I now intend to live by, That is always best and fittest to be done, that is most subservient to my present Interest.* This in Construction of Fact is the Profession which that Man takes up, who in Compliance with any *vicious* Affection abandons the Profession of his *Religion*.

4. Consider the *shameful* Cowardize of it. The Advantages of *true Religion* are *great* enough to encourage a Mind of any Constancy or Firmness to charge thro' the *greatest* Difficulties the World can interpose between *them* and *him*. Who that hath the Spirit of a Man would ever boggle to wade through a *narrow* *shallow* Stream of temporary Sufferings, whilst on the *farther* Shore he beholds a *Heaven* of *Immortal* Joys ready to receive and reward him? But for a Man to turn his Back, and run away from *God* and *Heaven*, for fear only of being disappointed by some *lewd*, *covetous*, or *ambitious* Hope, is such an Instance of *vile*, *prostitute* Baseness as is beneath even Contempt and Derision. For what Danger or Difficulty dares that Wretch encounter, that dares not stand by his *Religion*, in which he confesses all his *future* Hopes are involved, for fear of losing *such* a Place, or being disappointed of *such* a Preferment, which within a few Days or Years he knows very well he must lose *for ever*? He who hath a Mind capable of being scared out of his *Religion* by such *mean* Considerations as these, is *good* for nothing but only to be made the Foot-ball of Fortune, to be kick'd *up* and *down* upon her *scornful* Toe at Pleasure, who by threatening him with the *smallest* Evil, can huff him out of the *greatest* Good, and finding him a *wretched* *passive* Thing that hath not Strength enough to resist her *weakest* Impressions, makes

makes him her Sport and Recreation, and turns him into any thing, and tosses him whither she pleases; from *Truth* to *Falshood*, from *God* to the *Devil*, and from *Heaven* to *Hell* without the *least* Controul or Opposition. For the *poor* Man's Soul is grown so *tender* and *effeminate*, that for the *greatest* Good in all the World he cannot endure the *least* Air of Suffering to blow upon him: Tell him of Suffering for *Righteousness* sake, and the very Thought of it frights and appales him. Present but a Persecution at his Breast, and bid him stand and deliver, and the *crest-fallen* Pultroon is presently ready to cry out, *O spare my Life, spare my Skin! And take my Religion, take my God, and all my Hopes of Heaven and Immortality.* And who but an *infamous* Coward would ever endure to be hector'd out of so *vast* a Good by the *weak* and *impotent* Evils of this World; which if they do their *worst* can only rob him of a *few* *transitory* Enjoyments, which without their Constraint he must e'er long take his leave of *for ever*? How ridiculously *mean-spirited* would it be for a Man to deliver up his Purse to a Thief, who he knows hath no other Weapon but a *slender* Switch to hurt and offend him? But for a Man to deliver up his *Religion*, and with that his *God* and his *Heaven*, at the demand of a *short* *Skin-deep* Affliction, which can only disease him for a *few* Moments, and shall then determine in *everlasting* Pleasure and Delight, is a thousand times more *mean* and *ridiculous*.

5. And Lastly, Consider the *vast* Hazard and Insecurity of a Man's parting with his *Religion* in Compliance with his *vicious* Affections: For that which moves him to it is only his Prospect of living at Ease a *few* Years longer, or gratifying some *covetous* Desire of Ambition; but whether he obtain these Ends by parting with his *Religion*, is vastly *hazardous* and *insecure*. Perhaps when I have acted this *impious* and *perfidious* Part, I may be cast into such Circumstances, as may force me upon *impartial* Reflections, and make me see, whether I will or no, the Blackness and Infamy of my Revolt and Apostacy; which if it should happen, would inevitably raise such a Swarm of Horrors in my Conscience, and cast me into such Agonies and Convulsions of Soul, as will render me a *Hell* and a *Devil* to my self, and give me a thousand times more Pain and Uneasiness than all those *temporal* Evils could have done, for fear of which I ran away from my *Religion*. And if to shun *Poverty*, I should throw my self into *Desperation*; if to avoid a *Prison*, which to an *innocent* Mind with a *righteous* Cause can make a *Heaven* upon Earth, I should cast my self into a *Hell* upon Earth; if to keep in a *whole* Skin, I should bring upon my self the *intollerable* Anguish of a *wounded* Spirit; if to escape being *rejected*, *disgraced* and *discountenanced* by Men, I should expose my self to the *perpetual* Clamour and Reproaches of my *own* Conscience: If these Things, I say, should happen, as it's very *probable* they may, I shall find my self miserably disappointed of that Ease and *quiet* Enjoyment for the sake of which I basely abandoned my *Religion*; I shall find that to save my Garments from being singed, I have thrown my Body into a *consuming* Flame, and only exposed my Breast to save my Buckler. But then suppose this should not happen; suppose my Conscience should be *stupid* and *insensible* enough to bear the Guilt of my Apostacy without Remorse or Relenting; yet my Prospect of Gain and Advancement in this World is extremely *hazardous* and *insecure*. For it is a thousand to one, but they to whose *Religion* I turn, and upon whose favour I depend, will by *one* Means or *other* discover my Falshood and Insincerity; and if in the Course of my Actions, or any other *suspicious* Indication, they should find Cause to be *jealous* that I embrac'd their *Religion* only to serve my Interest, and against the Persuasion of my *own* Mind; if they are *wise* they will treat me as a *dangerous* Person, upon whom there is no Reliance; For how can they imagine that I should be *true* to them who have been *false* to my *Religion*? It is a *Proverb* among the *Jews*, *That Proselytes are not to be trusted to the tenth Generation*; and by too many *woful* Instances in *our own* Neighbourhood, we find it a Maxim in some *Men Politick*, *That a new Convert* is no more to be trusted than an *old Heretick*. And tho' for a while they may think fit to use me

as a *proper Tool* to serve a *present* Design, yet to be sure they will use me no longer than they needs must; and when I have done their work, I must expect to be thrust out, to make room for such as they can more safely depend on. And if this should not happen, as it is very probable it may, yet seeing all *humane Affairs* are liable to *perpetual Turns* and Mutabilities, perhaps upon the *next Revolution* a *contrary Interest* may appear upon the Stage, and then I shall find myself deserted of all my *present Supports* and Dependencies, and like a *forlorn Wretch*, utterly abandoned both by *God* and *Men*, without any other Company to entertain me in this my *mournful Solitude*, besides the *woful Remembrances* of my *Guilt* and *Shame*. To such *infinite Uncertainties* of obtaining their *Ends* are those *miserable Men* exposed, who desert their *Religion* in pursuit of their *worldly Interest*. And so I have done with the first Inference: But then,

2. From hence I infer, How *cautious* a Man ought to be in changing his *Religion*, or any Principles of it, lest that which induces him to it be not so much his *Conviction* as his *profligate Conscience*. I do not pretend, that Men are always to maintain the same Persuasion in Matters of *Religion*; for such an Obligation would as effectually serve the Interest of *false Religion* as of *true*. Whatever some Men pretend, we are all of us, from *Top to Bottom*, a Company of *fallible Creatures*; and if we are in an Error, as it is possible we may, it is our Duty to endeavour to be *better informed*. Nor do I deny, but an *honest-minded Man*, without being in the least influenced by a *bad Conscience*, may be innocently, or at least pitiably seduced from *Truth* to *Error* by *false Colours* and *probable Appearances*, for want of *sufficient Sagacity* to distinguish between *Sophistry* and *true Reason*. But if in Compliance with any *vicious Affection*, or in pursuit of any *worldly Interest*, a Man deserts the *Truth*, and takes up *false* and *erroneous Principles*, his Error is no longer imputable to the *Weakness* of his Understanding, but to the *Wickedness* of his Will; and a *wilful Error* in his Faith will prove as *fatal* and as *damnable* to him, as a *wilful Wickedness* in his Manners; and whenever his *wretched Soul* shall appear before the *great Searcher of Hearts*, it shall certainly be treated by him as a *wilful Apostate*, that hath perfidiously renounced his *Baptismal Vow*, and abjured his *God*, his *Saviour*, *Truth* and *Religion*. And seeing it is thus, it very highly concerns Men, as they love themselves, or have any Regard of their own *everlasting Well-being*, not to desert their *Religion*, or any Principle of it, upon any other Motive than a *thorough Conviction* of its *Fallhood*; not to suffer themselves to be seduced from it by any *temporal Interest* or *vicious Affection*, lest in so doing they *reprobate* themselves from *God*, and all the *blessed Hopes* of a *glorious Eternity hereafter*. For when Men are upon changing their Persuasions in *Religion*, it is an *ordinary* thing for their *Interests* and *Passions* so to intermingle with their Reasonings, that without some Care and Observation of themselves they will not be able to discern which of the *two* hath the *greater Influence* upon them; insomuch, that I am very apt to think that there are a great many *careless* and *unreflecting* People that are hurried meekly by their *Interests* and *Passions* out of one *religious Persuasion* into *another*, who yet thro' *gross Neglect* and *Inobservance* of themselves, believe themselves to be *Converts* upon *pure Reason* and *Conviction*. Perhaps upon the Solicitations of *worldly Interest* their Minds were wrought into a *strong Inclination* to a Change; insomuch, that they vehemently wish that they could but satisfy their *Reason* and *Conscience* of the *Truth* and *Reality* of that *new Persuasion*, which these their *importunate Passions* so earnestly invite them to embrace; and then with this *strong Byass* of *worldly Interest* upon their Minds, away they run hunting after *Reasons* and *Arguments* to convince and satisfy themselves; and if in this heat of *Affection* they can but light upon any *little shew* of *Probability*, that will quickly improve them into *irrefragable Proofs* and *Demonstrations*: For when a Man enquires whether such a *Doctrine* be *true*, with a *strong Inclination* of Will to find it so, he will be afraid to consult the *Reasons* and *Arguments* against it, lest they should convince him that it is *false*, and thereby defeat his *Inclination*. And

when once a Man is so prepossessed as that he will listen only to *one* side of the Question, be that side never so *absurd* and *ridiculous*, it is a *hard* Case if he cannot find Reasons enough to wheedle himself into the Belief of it ; for his very Inclination to believe it will deter him from entering into a *strict* Examination of those Reasons, and being afraid to examine them *too* far, lest he should find 'em *false* and *unconcluding*, if he can but discern the *least* Colour of Probability in their *first* View and Appearance, that will be sufficient to convince him, and render him a *warm* and *zealous* Convert : For indeed, the Man was a Convert in his Heart upon Reasons of *worldly* Interest, before ever he thought of those Reasons of *Religion* that made him a Convert in his Judgment ; so that 'twas his Interest that Converted his Affections, and his Affections that Converted his Faith ; and yet all this while, for want of *Self-reflection*, the Man imagines that his *new* Faith is wholly owing to the Reason and Evidence it carries with it ; whereas, would he but impartially consult himself, and take a *little* Pains to review the Steps and Progress of his Change, where it began, and how it proceeded and concluded, he would soon be forced to acknowledge, that the *first* and *fundamental* Reason of it was nothing but a *worldly* Interest. Wherefore, to secure you against this *dangerous* Piece of *Self-delusion*, by which I doubt there are *too* many Men do eternally ruin and destroy themselves, I will endeavour to give you some *certain* Signs and Indications by which you may be able to judge, if ever you should be tempted to change your *present Religion* or Persuasion, whether you do it sincerely and upon *pure* Conviction of Mind, or in *meer* Compliance with any *vicious* or *worldly* Affection : And I shall give them to you in these *following* Queries, which I earnestly beseech you seriously to propose to your *own* Souls, whenever any such Temptation shall befall you.

1. Whether upon your *first* Entrance on the Debate of Changing, your Prejudice lie on the side of your *present Religion*, or of that you are invited to turn to ?
2. Whether you have not some distaste in your Affections to your *present Religion*, before you entertained any Overtures of changing it ?
3. Whether that which gave you *first* Inclination to Change, was not some *temporal* Interest ?
4. Whether before you entertained any Intention to Change, you were fully resolved to consult impartially both sides of the Question ?
5. Whether when you *first* entered upon this Consultation, it was your *unfeigned* Intention, whatever shall happen to you, to adhere to that Side which should appear most *reasonable* ?
6. And lastly, Whether before you were inclined to change, you did conscientiously comply with the Obligations of *Religion*, and continued to do so afterwards ?

1. When you fall under any Temptation to change, ask your *own* Soul whether your Prejudice lie on the side of your *present Religion*, or of that which you are tempted to turn to ? There is *no* Man that sincerely professes any *Religion*, but must be strongly prejudiced for it, especially if he imbibed it betimes, and was principled in it by his Education ; For how can he sincerely profess it without engaging his Affections towards it, and heartily espousing its Interest ? For though I confess it is a Fault for Men so to preengage themselves to any *religious* Principles, especially such as are not exceeding *clear* and *evident* (and such are all the *Fundamentals of Christianity*) as to shut their Ears against all *contrary* Reasons, and obstinately resolve never to part with them, or so much as to admit into Consideration any Argument or Evidence against them ; yet after all, it is impossible for any *sincere* Professor of any *Religion*, whether it be *true* or *false*, to be so indifferently *affected* towards it as not to side with it in his Will as well as in his Faith and Judgment ; so that whenever he is tempted to desert it, the Temptation must necessarily find him strongly preengaged for it ; and unless it bring a-
long

long with it *sufficient* Evidence not only to convince his Reason, but also to captivate his Prejudice, it will never be able to prevail. For if ever the Man loved his *Religion*, his Passion will contend for it as well as his Reason; so that all Arguments against it, be they never so *strong* and *cogent*, will at *first* especially find a *difficult* Access to, and an *ungrateful* Reception in his Mind; and though he is so over-born by the Strength of the Evidence against it, that he can no longer forbear *doubting* and *suspecting* it, yet still he is very loth to part with it, and still he wishes it were *true*, though he is not able to evince it so, till after having endured a *long* Siege of *strong* and *pressing* Arguments he is driven at length out of all his Defences, and then his Prejudice yields as well as his Judgment to surrender up his *erroneous* Faith to the *prevailing* Power of his Convictions: This is the *natural* Temper of every *sincere* Professor of any *Religion*. When therefore you are at any Time tempted to change your *Religion*, before you proceed, pause a while, and consider seriously how you stand disposed, and which way your Heart is preingaged; whether to the *Religion* you have hitherto professed, or to *that* for which you are invited to change it. Consult a while with *your own* Souls to which side of the Question you are most inclined to listen, whether to the side which asserts your *present* Persuasion, or to *that* which contradicts and opposes it. Observe but which way your Wishes and your Passions move, whether *for* or *against* it, and which Reasons and Arguments you are most concerned for, *those* that oppose, or *those* that defend it. For assure your selves if the Temptation to change find you *lukewarm* and *indifferent*, or so much as *easy* and *plyable* to its Proposals; if it finds you *unaverse* to admit of a *contrary* Persuasion, or *forward* to catch at every Shew of Evidence against that *Religion* which you have hitherto professed, or ready to be *stagger'd* out of it upon the *first* Appearance of any Reasons or Probabilities against it; if, I say, you find any of these *evil* Symptoms upon you when you are *first* tempted to change, you have *great* Reason to suspect that you are a *false Hypocrite* to that Profession which you have hitherto made; that there is some *vile* Affection in you that hath got the Ascendant of your *Religion* and your Conscience, and that if in this Temper you proceed to a change, you will be found to be a Convert of your Lusts, and not of your Convictions.

2. When you fall under any Temptation to change your *Religion*, examine whether you have not entertained some Distaste to it in your Affections, before you proceed any farther; whether you have not entertained some Quarrel against it upon the account of the Disturbance it gives you in your *vicious* Delights and Enjoyments; or because it *too* severely exacts of you *universal* Sanctity of Life and Manners, to which of all things in the World your Heart is most averse, and without which the *inflexible* Principles of your *present* Persuasion will not permit you to hope for any Favour from God either *here* or *hereafter*. Consider whether upon these Accounts your Mind be not cankered with a *secret* Enmity against your *Religion*; whether under those Qualms of Conscience it often gives you, your Heart doth not rise against it, and you do not sometimes secretly wish that you could release your Faith from its *tyrannick* Principles which give you so much Pain and Disturbance, and submit it to some *gentler* *Religion* that would permit you to Sin in quiet, or at *least* prove more indulgent to your Lusts: For if this be your Temper, you are in very *great* Danger of being betrayed by it into any *false* and *corrupt* *Religion* that shall be tender'd you in exchange for your own. For if this *other* *Religion* offer but any *fair* Terms to your *vicious* Affections, or propose but any Expedient how to accommodate the *vexatious* Quarrel between them and your Consciences; if it doth but any way reconcile your Hope of *Heaven* to your *vicious* Manners, by directing you to some *easier* Terms of Salvation than that of forsaking all Unrighteousness, and *worldly* Lusts, and live *soberly*, and *righteously*, and *godly* in this *present* World; if it will but admit of any Commutation of that *unsufferable* Penance of Godliness for *bodily* Exercise, of *inward* Mortification for a *long* Fast or a *sound* Whipping, of putting off the *old* Man for putting on a *Hair Shirt*, of running the Race of a *holy* Life for a *santring*

Pilgrimage, or the like; this is a *Religion* for your Tooth, with which your *naughty* Heart will be ready enough to fall in love upon the *first* Interview; and when once it hath gained our Heart and Affections, if we do not take the *greater* heed they will quickly gain our Faith and Judgment: For when a Man is *angry* with his own *Religion* because it sits *uneasy* on his Conscience, if a more *easy Religion* presents it self to him, he can hardly forbear wishing it were *true*, though as yet he hath no Evidence that it is so; and then a very *slender* Evidence will suffice to induce a Belief of the Reality of any Thing which a Man earnestly withes and desires. If in this *ill* Temper of Mind therefore you should be tempted to change your *Religion*, it concerns you as much as your Souls are worth to look about you; for you have a Seducer in your Breast, a *prevalent insinuating* Seducer, *viz.* some *vile* and *sinful* Affection, who, if you listen to his *charming* Persuasions, will certainly betray you into a most *damnable* Apostacy. Wherefore before you proceed to examine the Merits of the Cause, consider seriously with your selves that *that* Disturbance which your *present Religion* gives to your *vicious* Affections, for which you are so *angry* with it, is so far from being a *just* Ground to suspect it, that it is a *real* Evidence of the Truth of it; because it is a *sensible* Demonstration of its Holiness, which is an *inseparable* Concomitant of Truth; and therefore for you to desert it upon this Motive is in Effect to pronounce it a *false Religion*; because it gives you a *sensible* Experiment of its Truth and Reality.

3. When you fall under any Temptation to change your *Religion*, consider whether that which gave you the *first* Inclination to change was not some *temporal* Interest; whether before ever you admitted any Thought of a Change, you did not perceive *another Religion* appear upon the Stage attended with all the *fair* Hopes and Advantages of this World, and whether this Prospect did not *first* suggest to you a *great* Inclination to enter into its Retinue. I do not deny, but that even *worldly* Considerations may so far influence *honest* Minds as to put them upon a more *severe* and *impartial* Scrutiny of their *present* Persuasions in *Religion*; and unless it be in Case of *palpable* Truth or Falshood it is but *honest* Prudence, when a Man's *temporal* Interest lies at stake, to take Care that he is sure of his Hand, that he doth not throw it away upon a *false* Persuasion in a Fit of *blind* Humour or Obstina'y, and sacrifice that to an *erroneous* Judgment which he owes to no *other* Altar but Truth's. And indeed before I throw my self upon any Suffering, whether it be *Loss* or *Pain*, I am bound in Conscience diligently to enquire whether it be for *Truth* or *Righteousness* sake, lest instead of receiving the Crown of Martyrdom I am sent away to seek my Reward in the *Paradise of Fools*. But if merely upon the Consideration of any *present* Loss or Advantage I find my self strongly inclined to change my *Religion*, before ever I enter into the Merits of the Cause to examine the Reasons *pro* and *con*, it is a *certain* Sign that *that* Loss or Advantage that inclines me, hath a more *powerful* Influence upon me than my *Religion*; that I love the World better than God, and do prefer my *earthly* Expectations before all my Hopes of *everlasting* Happiness. And if in this *ill* Temper of Mind I should be tempted to a *present* Change, it concerns me as much as my Soul is worth to be very *careful* what I do: For I stand upon the Brink of a Precipice, the *soul* and *fatal* Precipice of Apostacy, into which if I fall I am ruined *for ever*. For if in changing my *Religion* it be found that I followed this my *wicked* Inclination more than any *sincere* Conviction, I must expect to be treated by God as an *Apostate* and *Renegado*, as a *wilful* Deserter of his Cause, and Betrayer of his *sacred* Truth. But if I change while I stand thus inclined, it is fearfully *hazardous* but this will be found to be the Truth of the Case; for in all Probability my *wicked* Inclination will cast a Mist before my Understanding, and so darken its Prospect that it will hardly be able to distinguish the *grossest* Sophistry from the *clearest* Reason. So that now those Arguings which before I saw through with half an Eye, and look'd upon as most *absurd* and *ridiculous*, will appear to my *abused* and *byass'd* Mind, in the Colours of *clear* Evidence and *plain* Demonstration, and I shall be ready to surrender up my Faith to those *trifling*

fling Pretences of Reason and Authority, which before I laughed at and despised: Now, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church* will seem a very pregnant Proof that all the *Bishops of Rome* from *St. Peter* are ordained the *Supreme Heads* of the Church, and the Fountains of all *Ecclesiastical* Authority, though they are not so much as mentioned in it, no nor from any Thing that appears so much as thought of. Now, *This is my Body*, looks like a substantial Evidence of the Truth of *Transubstantiation*, and of all those wild Absurdities it contains; though those Forms of Speech, *I am the true Vine*, and *I am the Door*, do as substantially prove that *Christ* bears Grapes, and turns upon Hinges. Now every Thing will appear to me in a quite different Guize from what it did before, and I shall fancy that I spy Demonstration where before I could only discern Probability; for a good Sum of Money, or a rich Preferment is a strange Clearer of some Mens Eyesight. Thus when a Man begins to think of changing his Religion under the powerful Influence of his worldly Interest, that is usually the only effectual Reason that leads and persuades him: As for other Reasons, they only serve for Form-sake to disguise the foul Apostacy into some Resemblance of a sincere Conversion; for till his Interest struck in with them, they signified nothing with him, made not the least Impression on his Mind; but being back'd with that, all on a sudden they are wondrous cogent and persuasive; from whence it is evident that they received their Strength and Force from his Interest, without the Air of which they are not able to operate; and consequently that the Change of his Faith is owing to the over ruling Interest of his Covetousness and Ambition, and not at all to the Prevalence of Reason and sincere Conviction. For 'twas that Interest that strongly inclined him to change before ever he knew any Reason for it, and then 'twas that Inclination that made his Reasons, and created his Convictions; and let him talk what he pleases of Reason, Scripture, and Authority; if he was strongly inclined to change before he was moved to it by Reason and Evidence, it is plain that the prevailing Motive of his Conversion was either the Fear of losing some good warm Place, or the Hope of gaining some important Station or Preferment. And if this be found the Truth of his Case when he comes to appear before the Tribunal of God, it had been a thousand times better for him that he had never been born; for then he will be found a base Defector of his God, a treacherous Judas to his Saviour, and a perfidious Renegado from his Religion, and according to the Quality of his Sin and Guilt receive his Portion of Damnation.

4. Consider whether before you entertained any Intention to change, you were fully resolved impartially to consult both sides of the Question. I doubt there are too many among us that first resolve to change their Religion, and then begin to enquire after Reasons and Arguments against it, and that their Resolution to change is so far from being the Effect of sincere Conviction, that their Conviction is the Effect of their Resolution. First, Some vile Affection, or some temporal Interest recommends another Religion to them that either gives them leave to be wicked without Remorse or Disturbance, or promises them Gain and Advancement; upon which they resolve right or wrong to entertain and embrace it; and then to excuse themselves to their own Consciences, or to vindicate their Reputation to the World from the Scandal of being down-right Apostates, they fall a hunting after Reasons and Arguments to convince themselves of the Truth of it, or at least to make the World believe that it was not their Interest but their Conviction that turned them. And when Men thus resolve first, and enquire afterwards, to be sure their Enquiry will be very partial; for being fully resolved to change their Religion upon some vitious or secular Motive, it is become their Interest to pick Holes in it, and to reason or cavil themselves out of the Belief of it. And this makes them shy of bringing the Matter under a fair and impartial Examination, lest while they are seeking Reasons to overthrow their Faith, they should find Reasons to establish and confirm it. So that they begin their Enquiry with these secret Intentions; *We will listen only to one side of the Cause, and leave the other to shift for it self; and seek for as many Arguments as we can against our Religion,*

Religion, but none for it. We will read the Books and consult the Teachers of one side only, viz. the opposite side to our present Belief and Persuasion, and if among them we can but find Arguments enough to render the contrary Persuasion any way probable, we will submit our Faith to it without any farther Enquiry, and not trouble our selves to examine the Evidence on the other side, for Fear we should be convinc'd in spite of our Teeth, that the Truth lies there; and then our Conscience will never let us be quiet, but be perpetually clamouring against us for base and impious Apostates. That this is the *foul and hypocritical* Intention of too many among us, is notorious enough by their Practice; they leap from Church to Church, and from one Communion to another, without any Pause or Consideration; they are with us to Day, and gone from us to *Morrow*, and are such *Mushroom, extemporary* Converts, that before ever we hear they doubted of their *own*, they are confirmed in a *contrary Religion*. In short, they steal out of their Religion so softly, and with so little Noise, that they are commonly gone before ever we hear they are going, as if they were afraid we should stop and detain them by *better* Reasons and *fuller* Convictions. Whereas had these Men any Conscience or Honesty in them, they would consider, that *Religion* is a Thing *too sacred and serious* to be thus dallied and trifled with, and that to change ones Religion is a matter of such *vast* Importance as requires a *long and through* Consideration, and a very *clear and full* Conviction of Mind; that there is *too much* depends upon it to part with it upon *slight* Pretences, and that it concerns them as much as an *Eternity* of Bliss amounts to, not to desert it upon any *other* Inducement but that of a *throughwell-weighed* Persuasion of Conscience. And if they had *had* any such *honest* Thoughts about them while they were under the Temptation to change, they would never have admitted any Doubt of their Religion, but upon *great and palpable* Evidence; and then they would have doubted long before they would have concluded against it, and not have precipitated their Judgment *hand over head* into a *contrary* Persuasion, till they had *first* applied themselves for Resolution again and again to their *old* Guides, and Pastors, and with all *due* Deference to their Authority, had strictly examined all their Reasons and Answers, till they had thoroughly inspected their Arguments *pro* and *con*, and equally heard both sides of the Cause; till they had read, advised, and consulted on both sides, and weighed the whole Matter *over and over* with the *greatest* Care and Exactness. But when Men run away from their Religion in an Instant, without ever observing this *regular* Process of *sincere* Enquiries, it is a *plain* Case that their Wills were resolved before their Understandings, and that they were converted before ever they were convinced; and consequently that it was not Reason and Conviction that turned them, but Lust or Interest: For though when they are turned they may perhaps be very *diligent* to seek Conviction, yet this is only an After-game which they are fain to play to save their Conscience or their Reputation.

5. Consider before you entertain any Intention to change. Whether it be your *unfeigned* Intention, whatever shall happen to you, to adhere to that side which shall appear most *reasonable*. Perhaps you are not yet arrived to that Height of Impiety as to resolve *right or wrong* to change your Religion, whether you find it *true or false* upon a *just and fair* Examination; for this is such an *horrible* defiance of God, such an *express and absolute* Renunciation of all that is *sacred and good* as no Man can be guilty of, who is not utterly abandoned of all his *natural* Sense of Religion, and relish of *Good and Evil*. But yet perhaps you may be tempted to change with the Prospect of such Advantages on the *one* side, and Calamities on the *other*, which though it doth not obtain of you that *base and wicked* Resolution, yet doth so far prevail as to engage you upon a *fresh* Enquiry to try whether upon *second* Thoughts and *better* Consideration, you can satisfy your own Minds of the Truth of that Religion you are invited to turn to, that so you may, if possible, comply with a *good* Conscience, and secure your Interest in doing your Duty. And thus far you are safe enough; but before you proceed any farther, it concerns you, as you tender your *everlasting* Interest, to look into your *own* Souls, and consider seriously whether you are unfeignedly resolved,

resolved, whatsoever the Consequence of Things may be, to cleave fast to the Truth of God on which side soever you shall find it. Put the Question to your selves over and over, *O my Soul, here are such Advantages, and such Calamities before you, importuning you to change your present discountenanced Religion for a more thriving and prosperous One: Are you now resolved fairly and impartially to examine the Merit of the Cause?* And if thereupon you still find Reason to believe that your present Religion is the very Truth of Jesus, will you rather renounce those Advantages and incur those Calamities than forgo it? Will you follow the Truth wheresoever you find it, and whithersoever it shall happen to lead you, though it be from Preferment to Persecution? Are you resolved by the Grace of God to prostrate all your temporal Hopes and Fears before it, and rather to lose any Good, or suffer any Evil, than desert it? For let me tell you, if you find your Heart shrink at this Proposal, or that you have any reserved Intention, if the worst come to the worst, rather to part with your Religion right or wrong, than to shake hands with your temporal Interest, you are in a very unfitting Temper to examine on which side the Truth lies. For it is a plain Case, your Mind is under a prevailing Byass of temporal Hopes and Fears, which will be sure to incline it to favour that side of the Question which is most for your Interest; and 'twill be impossible for you to examine fairly and judge impartially whilst your Judgment is thus bribed and corrupted by your Interest. For your Will hath already determined upon the Matter before ever your Understanding hath heard the Cause, and it is your secret Intention, right or wrong, to forgo your Religion rather than your Interest, if ever they come in Competition. So that now you will be obliged in your own Defence to use your utmost Art to set the fairest Colours upon the Evidences against your Religion, and to stifle and enervate those that assert and maintain it, lest they should so confirm you in the Belief of it as that when Occasion requires, you will not be able to surrender it up without committing an horrible Outrage and Violence upon your selves. Wherefore before you suffer your worldly Hopes and Fears to summon your Religion upon a new Tryal, be sure you fix this Resolution in your Souls; *By the Grace of God I will now lay aside all Interest and Affection, and strictly examine the Evidence on both Sides with an equal and unbiass'd Judgment. I will attend to nothing but the Reasons of Things, and the pure Merits of the Cause; and wherever I find the Truth lies, whether on the Side of my Interest or against it, I will be sure to follow it whatsoever shall be the Event and Issue.* For if upon the Temptation of any worldly Interest you bring your Religion to a new Tryal, with this secret Intention, that though it should still approve it self to your Judgment, yet you will rather part with it than abandon that Interest, this very Intention will be apt to blind and mislead your Judgment, to arm your Wit and Reason against your Religion, and to set all your Faculties at work to argue you out of it, and pervert you from it to a contrary Faith and Persuasion; which if it should accomplish, you will certainly be found guilty of a wilful Apostacy when you come to be tryed before the Tribunal of God, to whose all seeing Eye the most secret Motions of your Souls are as visible as if they were written on your Foreheads with a Sun-beam; who sees your treacherous Heart and false Intention rather to forsake his Truth than your Interest, and knows very well that it is this that seduces you, and gives Force to those false Reasons and Convictions that impose upon your Judgment, and betray your Faith.

6. And Lastly, When you fall under any Temptation to change your Religion, consider whether before you were inclined to change you did conscientiously comply with the Obligations of it. We have too many Men that pretend to be mighty inquisitive after the true Church and the true Religion, and yet live as if there were no such Thing as true Religion in the World, and quietly allow themselves in such impious Courses as do openly affront the common Principles of all Religions. There is nothing they dread so much as Heresy, and, if you will believe them, are monstrously concerned to examine whether the Church with which they now communicate be Catholick or Heretical; and yet all this while they persist without any Concern

Concern or Remorse in the most *damnable Heresy* in the World, and that is a *wicked and immortal Life*. So that upon comparing their *Atheistical Lives* with the *loud Cry* they make about the *true Catholick Faith and Church*, one would be tempted to think that their *Christianity* began at the *wrong End* of their *Creed*, and that they believed in the *Holy Catholick Church* before they believe in *God the Father Almighty*, or in *Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord*; Which is such a *gross and fulsom Piece* of Hypocrisy as one would think any *modest Man* should be ashamed of. For in the Name of *God*; Sirs, What have you to do to wrangle and make a Noise about *Religion*, whose *profligate Manners* are a Shame and Scandal to *common Humanity*? It is a Reproach to any *Religion* for you to name it, and Shame to any *Church* for you to pretend to it; and therefore when such as you raise a Cry after the *true Church and true Religion*, it is a *plain Case* that whatever Pretence you bring upon the Stage you are prompted by some *base Interest* behind the Curtain. And is it not a *pleasant Thing* to hear such *Profligates* as these pretend to be *Converts*, who only turn from *one Opinion* to *another*, but still continue as *wicked and unreformed* in their Manners under the Opinion they turn to, as they were under *that* they turned from? These are such *Converts* as there is no *Church* in the World that advances *true Piety* above *worldly Interest*, but would glory to lose, and blush to gain: And what *Diogenes* said of a *wicked Fellow* that praised him, that the *Religion* may say which those Men turn to, *What Hurt have I done, what wicked Principles am I guilty of, that such vile Wretches as these should commend and embrace me?* For, for God's sake, What is it that they are converted to? Is it to any Thing that renders them *wiser or better Men*? No, The contrary is *too notorious* through the whole Course of their Actions. Well then, it seems they are converted to something that doth them no manner of Good, that serves them to no *true End* of *Religion*, that is, to a *meer empty Notion* that only gingles about their Understandings, but hath no *good Influence* on their Hearts and Manners. Had their Conversion proceeded upon *pure Principles* of Conscience, that would have obliged them to change their Manners as well as their Opinions; there being very few Opinions in *Religion* so *contradictory* to the *natural Sentiments* of Conscience as a *vicious and immoral Life*. Supposing that the *Papal Supremacy, Purgatory, and Transubstantiation* were true, yet that the *contrary Doctrines* to these are Errors can never be so evident to any Man's Conscience, as that *Drunkenness, Adultery, Fraud and Oppression* are Sins; and therefore for any Man to pretend that he forsook *those* Errors out of Conscience, who yet makes no Conscience of continuing in *these* Sins is such a *transparent Hypocrisy* as hath not Vizard and Disguise enough to abuse either the most *Candid or Credulous*. If therefore before you are resolved to forsake your Sins you are tempted to forsake your *Religion*, it is a *plain Case* that it is not your Conscience or Conviction that tempts you, but your Lust or Interest. Had it been Conscience, it would have been far more *importunate* with you to reform your Manners than your Faith, and to become *good Men*, than *Catholick Believers*; and therefore under your *present Circumstances* you ought to be very *careful* what you do, and how you comply with the Temptation, lest to all the Rest of your Sins you add that *soul and fatal* one of Apostacy, and thereby fill up the Measure of your Iniquities, and finally provoke *Almighty God* to abandon you as you have abandoned him, and give you up for *lost and desperate*.

A S E R-

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S E R M O N

PREACH'D at the

F U N E R A L

OF THE

Reverend JOHN SCOTT, D. D.

UPON,

PHIL. iii. 20, 21.

Our Conversation is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all Things unto Himself.

I.



WHEN a Pestilential Distemper was raging in *Africk*, the holy Father St. Cyprian takes occasion from thence to encourage the Christians against the fear of Death; and to set before them such Consolations as were proper for this Calamity: He assures them that * *The Day of their Decease would restore them to Paradise, and to the Kingdom of Heaven; and*

the concluding Argument that he useth, is to remind them of the excellent Company they should meet with in the other World, immediately upon their departure from hence; *There is waiting for us above (saith he) a great number of our dearest Friends; our Parents and Brethren, and Children are all desiring our access to them; and being now secured of their own Immortality, they are still solicitous for our Salvation; and what a common rejoicing will it be both to them and us, to have the Sight and Embraces of one another? And then he goes on to speak of the Apostles, and Prophets, and Martyrs, and Virgins, that we shall find in the heavenly Mar-*

* *Amplectamur diem, qui assignat singulos domicilio suo; qui nos istius ereptos, & laqueis secularibus exsolutos paradiso restituit & regno caelesti. De Mortal.*

sions: As if nothing could be more desirable than to hasten thither with all possible speed; *Quis non ad suos navigare festinans, ventum prosperum cupidius optaret, ut velociter caros liceret amplecti?* Thus we see this glorious Martyr discoursing with such Earnestness of the next Life; as if he were then hoisting up his Sails, and lanching forth into the Ocean of Eternity: And he is the more to be hearkened to, because he had receiv'd (as he tells us) immediate

* *Nobis ipsis minimis quoties revelatum est, ut publice predicarem fratres nostros non esse lugendas accersitione Dominica de seculo liberatos; nec accipiendas esse hic auras vestes, quando illi ibi indumenta alba jam sumpserint?* Ibid.

* *Revelation* from God, concerning the Happiness of departed Souls: And from what he hath said, in Conjunction with others, we may gather it to have been the more approv'd Opinion of the Primitive Church, that the Spirits of Righteous Men go directly to Heaven; and the Fathers who speak otherwise, and favour an intermediate Estate, seem to have done it upon their own peculiar Notions: as they might inoffensively do, in a Matter not clearly decided by the Light

of Scripture. The comfort which that admirable Father gives to the Christians of his Age, is very seasonable for us at this time; when God, in his unsearchable Judgment, hath remov'd from us so many eminent Persons; and particularly

* Mr. Warton, Mar. 5.
Dr. Scot, March 10.
Dr. Dove, Mar. 11.

ly within the Space of a Week, * three of the greatest Ornaments of our Church; as it were in attendance upon the untimely Obsequies of that blessed Queen, that (bright Luminary of Religion and Vertue) whose delight it was to protect and adorn it. However we must with humble Submission adore the Justice of God:

And we hope that he intends not War against us by calling his Servants home; that he will now accept of a Sacrifice, and that some of these holy Prophets will prevail with him to stop the hand of his destroying Angel. *Turn us, O God of our Salvation, and cause thine Anger towards us to cease: Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? Wilt thou draw out thine Anger to all Generations? Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy People may rejoice in thee?* Psal. lxxxv. 4, 5, 6. Doubtless he will revive us, and speak Peace unto us; if we attend to what he hath spoken to us, and turn not again to Folly: And what he speaks to us upon this mournful Occasion; what Thoughts and Resolutions he expects from us; and what our Eloquent Brother would speak to us, if he were not now silent; we may hear from the Apostle: *Our Conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

II. In which Words I shall desire you to consider these two Points: First, A Duty represented, and that is to have our Conversation in Heaven: And Secondly, An Incitement to it from the Consideration of our Future Bliss. I begin with the Duty which is intimated in my *Text*, namely, The having of our Conversation in Heaven: For the Explication whereof I shall briefly insist upon these two Heads: First, What is imported hereby; And Secondly, How reasonable it is to act accordingly. First, Let us observe what is imported by having our Conversation in Heaven: the Word is *κοινωνία*, and seems here to signify the Rights and Immunities of a Citizen; and to intimate that we are by Profession Citizens of that glorious Corporation which is above, and ought to demean our selves as such, that we may not lose the Freedom and Privileges belonging to it: This is a *continuing City*, and a *City which hath Foundations*; Heb. xiii. 14. and xi. 10, *Clem. Alex. l. 4.* as the Apostle calls it: And a very learned Father tells us, That the *Stoicks* would allow Heaven only to be properly a City, no Community upon Earth deserving that Name. * 'Tis a fair

* *Ἡ πόλις ἡ ἐκείνη οὐκ ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ γῇ, ἀλλ' ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. Phil. Jud. p. 196.*

Conjecture that our *Apostle* doth here more particularly allude to the Dignity of the Freemen of Rome, which in his Days was mightily esteem'd, and enjoy'd by many that were not born there, and lived in Countries very remote: And this resembleth the Condition of Christians, who are Naturaliz'd and Incorporated

rated into another City, even while they remain at such a Distance from the Place of their Liberty, and are labouring under the Servitude of this present Life.

III. To explain the Compass of the Duty before us, we may take Notice, That it includes the three following Steps: *First*, A due esteem of the Happiness of the next Life: *Secondly*, The kindling of our Desires and Affections towards the attainment of it: And *Thirdly*, A Conversation answerable thereunto. *First*, we are to esteem the Felicity of the next Life, suitably to what we know of it; we are not to diminish our Concern for it, because it flatters not our Sensuality, is a pure and invisible Possession; and we are to follow our Saviour's Judgment, comparing it to *treasure hid in a Field*, for which a wise Purchaser will *sell all that he hath*: And to a *Pearl of great Price*, which a Merchant finding expos'd to Sale, *he went and sold all that he had, and bought it*: And assuring us, that if a Man could *gain the whole World by losing his own Soul*, Mat. xiii. 44, 45. and xvi. 26. he would make a very foolish Bargain. 'Tis possible, I confess, for Men that are wholly taken up with the Distractions and Enjoyments of this present World, to have a *speculative* Regard for those Felicities which are promis'd to us hereafter; and in their lucid Intervals, to think them more valuable than those weak and empty Satisfaction, which they are so eager in pursuing. But still whatever the Judgment may be of cool Reason, the Opinions of Men are to be weighed by their Actions; and if sensual Objects carry the Soul after them, and are labour'd after with the warmest Prosecutions, 'tis plain enough they are nearest to the Heart, and prefer'd before the spiritual Joys of the Life to come.

IV. Secondly, The having our Conversation in Heaven, implies the seeking for it earnestly, and the inflaming of our *Desires* and *Affections* towards it: For what we love and set a value upon, we are naturally willing to enjoy; and 'tis impossible that any Man should have a true Notion of Heaven, and not wish to be possess'd of it hereafter: Only here lies the Misery of deluded Sinners, that they would have it consistent with their Lusts and Pleasures, and attainable upon such Terms as God cannot allow. But when Christ hath commanded us to *seek the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, with preference to all other Things, and to lay up our Treasure in Heaven*, Mat. vi. 33, 20, 21. that our Heart may likewise be there: We are not to think of Heaven, as we would of a beautiful and magnificent City, where we have no Business, and to which we never intend to go, but we are to look upon it, as the Place to which we are Travelling, and where God hath provided for us the best Patrimony; and hereupon to anticipate the Possession of it by our fervent wishes, and to be affected as the Psalmist was; *My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?* Psal. xlii. 2. He that hath a rich Vessel coming Home from the Indies, will be frequently grasping it in his Mind, and hearkening continually after the Tidings of it, and full of Solitude till it safely arrives in the Harbour: And so the devout Soul that hath a lively Sense of the Glories of another Life, is ever looking towards them, and longing for an Admission to them, and lifting up her Head with joyful Expectation, because her Redemption draweth nigh. Supposing we sincerely believe the Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting; it follows in a natural Course, that we should be very desirous of attaining to this Immortality, and have strong Inclinations to dwell in the Habitations of Eternity: Or else the Will doth not go after the Judgment with such Ardency and Sedulity, as it doth in secular Pursuits; and 'tis a vain Profession that we make, *I look for the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Life of the World to come.*

V. Thirdly, The having our Conversation in Heaven imports the living answerably to our Hopes of Futurity; for otherwise they will be miserably disappointed, and *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14. And this is not only the Condition immutably fix'd, but is also necessary to dispose us for the relish of those pure and spiritual Pleasures; which can be no Paradise to an unclean Soul: And if we could imagine the Rich Glutton, with all his vicious Appetites, translated into the Position of *Lazarus*, even the Bosom of the Patriarch would have been to him a Place of Torment. God hath been unspeakably Merciful, in preparing an eternal Reward for us, upon such easy and just Conditions as he hath enabled us to perform; and in sending his Son to be our Guide, and our Sacrifice: But 'tis absurd to presume that we are bound to do nothing for this mighty recompence; that we shall be waisted to Bliss, while we lie sleeping in the *Dark*; that we may go with unclean Hands, and polluted Hearts into the dwellings of *Purity*; and that the Blood of the everlasting Mediator was shed for lazy, and impenitent Sinners that trample upon his Cross. There is no Man so very brutal, but that he wisteth with himself, he might be happy after Death; and if he hath not quite extinguish'd the Sparks of Natural Religion, and hath any glimpse of the Immortality to come, he desires to be made partaker of it: But how many are in Hell, that during their Abode here were hoping foolishly they might get to Heaven at last? And what can it avail to wish faintly, and slothfully for Blessedness, without striving to obtain it, in the way which God hath appointed? It was the *good and faithful Servant*, that improv'd the Talents committed to him, and not the unprofitable *Lounger*, who enter'd into the *Joy of his Lord*, Mat. xxv. 21. There is no mocking of God; and without serving him sincerely, there can neither be any comfort after Death, nor dying with Peace and Satisfaction. Who can escape the Darkness, and Honours of a Death-bed, when Men have liv'd dissolutely, and profanely; and their Old Vices are got together to hunt them like *Spooks*; and Conscience is awakened to Accuse, and *Condemn* them; and the World deserting them, nothing remains but the *Quintessence* of their *Sins* to pursue them immediately to the Bar of Justice? But no Consolations are equal to those resulting from a Life religiously spent; and the true Christian under the bitterest Agonies of Death hath a God to converse with, and a Saviour before his Eyes, and an Eternity of Joy ready to receive him: And he can say with Assurance, *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is none upon Earth that I desire besides Thee; my Flesh and my Heart faileth; but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever*, Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26.

VI. I come now in the Second Place to evince the Reasonableness of having our Conversation in Heaven: And that I may not trespass in staying upon such an undeniable Truth, I shall only mention these three Considerations. First, That our Christian Profession engageth us to this Holy Temper; and by our *Baptism* we are born as it were into another World, and made the Citizens of Heaven; and consequently are oblig'd to the Behaviour of such: And he that honestly follows a Crucify'd Master, and renounces the Allurements of this World, must be suppos'd to have a Prospect of the other, *where Christ sitteth on the Right Hand of God*, Col. iii. 1. Secondly, Heaven is the Place for which we are created; and God in forming Man after his own Image, design'd him for the Everlasting Fruition of himself: Innocent Men would have been Translated to a much higher Paradise; and we that are fallen know it to be the end of our Redemption, that we should come to the *City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem*; Heb. xii. 22. and that we should inherit the Kingdom prepared for us from the Foundation of the World, Mat. xxv. 34. Thirdly, Heaven is the Place of the greatest Happiness attainable by us; and not only inexpressibly beyond all these lower

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Satisfactions, but also above our Comprehension: For till we know the most extended Capacity of the Soul, and what Degrees of Blessedness, what Proficiency, what Illuminations 'tis capable of; and till we know moreover how far God will discover himself in filling all the Dimensions of it, and in raising it to the highest Pitch of created Perfection; we cannot have a just, and proportionable Idea of that ineffable Happiness, which is purchas'd for us by the Blood of Christ. So much however God hath reveal'd to us concerning our future Reward, as is sufficient to quicken our most active Endeavours for it: *It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when God shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is:* 1 John iii. 2. And certainly the Vision of God's Essential Glories, which are unapproachable to us here, and the Resemblance to his transcendent Nature; the beholding of Him Face to Face, the dwelling within the Circle of his Throne, and the seeing of the Mysteries of Faith unveil'd; together with the consequential Arden- cy of Affection towards God, and the loving, and admiring, and adoring of him proportionably to the Light of the Understanding; all this is infinitely more worthy of our Ambition, than all the fading Enjoyments of the World; and may engage us to be diligent in our Christian Race, and in working for Eternity.

VII. This will be further Evident from the Second Point which I offer'd; namely, The Incitement given by our Apostle, from the Consideration of our future Bliss: *Our Conversation is to be in Heaven, because we look for our Sa- viour's coming from thence in Glory; to raise us up to an Immortal Life, and to change our vile, and infirm, and mouldering Bodies, into such as will be of a noble, and lasting Frame; and fashion'd after the Pattern of his own Re- surrection.* In this Argument of our Apostle we may take Notice of two As- sertions; the first of them is, *That this vile Body, which we carry about here, is to rise again, and to be re-built after the Likeness of the glorious Body of Christ:* And if it were otherwise, 'tis not easily conceivable how the Do- ctrine of the Resurrection can be properly maintain'd. For that only can just- ly be said to rise again which is fallen, and buried in the Earth: But the Soul is incapable of dying; and therefore unless the same Body be reviv'd, unless there be a Resuscitation of that which was asleep in the Grave, we are in Dan- ger of losing the Resurrection. Did not Christ arise with the same Flesh that was Crucified, and retaining the very Print of the Nails? And are we not to be raised after the same Model? And he hath told us, *That all that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth unto the Resurrection either of Life, or of Damnation:* John v. 28, 29. And his Apostle hath taught us, *That this corruptible must put on Incorruption, and this mortal must put on Immortality:* 1 Cor. xv. 53. It shall put on a new Garment, and by consequence shall remain entire; and from hence the Identity of the corrupted, and the rising Body seems to be clearly reveal'd. If it be so, 'tis in vain to contradict it by Philosophical Cavils; for to support our Belief, the Apostle reminds us of God's Omnipotent Strength, *whereby he is able to subdue all Things unto him- self.* The Power of God is but a weak Argument for the Truth of an Article of Faith, unless the Revelations of his Will be clear and convincing; for o- therwise by this Plea the most absurd Monstrosities in Religion may be de- fended: But where the Divine Will is perspicuously declar'd, (as in the case of the Resurrection) the Omnipotence of God comes in for a seasonable, and sufficient Reply to all the astonishing Difficulties that our Reason can muster up. 'Tis, I confess, not easy to conceive, how the Members that have been consumed in the Grave, and scatter'd into a thousand Places, and travell'd through all the Elements, should after many Ages reassemble their broken Pieces, and shake off their Rottenness, and reassume their ancient Figure, and rise up into a beautiful Frame. But who can prescribe Limits to an Almighty Being? *The Thunder of his Power who can understand?* Job. xvi. 14. And since he hath

hath promis'd to raise up Mankind, who can say to him, that it cannot possibly be? We know the infinite Power of God, in building this vast Universe, when he had no Matter to work upon; and in fashioning Man, the Image of himself, out of the Dust of the Ground; and we cannot but admire the daily Miracles of his Providence, in continuing the successive Generations of Men, and forming them all in the Womb: And then we may conclude, That he who hath done all this, is likewise able to recollect, and reanimate our putrify'd Bodies, and to over-power all the Obstacles that stand in his way: And why should it be thought a Thing incredible with us, that God should raise the Dead? Acts xxvi. 8.

VIII. The Second Assertion in our Apostle is this; That there is to be a Change in our Bodies at the Resurrection, and a Likeness to the glorify'd Body of Christ: They are to be *substantially* the same, but cloath'd with a Robe of unknown Glory, and with new Endowments and Qualities, suitably to that Heavenly Life which they must enter into. The Question was made in the Days of our Apostle, *How are the Dead raised up? And with what Body do they come?* 1 Cor. xv. 35. and 42, 43, 44. And he not only clears the Certainty of our Resurrection, but also the Conformity of it to that of

Christ: And it was an old * Tradition in the Church, That every Christian shall be raised up in the same Ripeness of Age, as our Saviour was of at the Time of his Passion.

* Hieron. Ep. 27.

The Body is sown in Corruption, and raised in Incorruption; that is, in this Life it hath the Seeds of Dissolution, and upon the withdrawing of the Soul, must of Necessity fall into Dust and Rottenness; but hereafter it will be subject to no Decay, no Frailty, and no Misery, being fram'd of such a durable Substance, as to prove an Immortal Habitation to the returning Soul: It will not be pinch'd with Necessities, and Pains, and Diseases, nor troubled with daily Repairs, and with providing against the Ruins of Mortality; for they that shall be counted worthy to obtain the Resurrection of the Dead, cannot die any more; as being equal to the Angels, and the Children of God, Luke xx. 35, 36. Again, *The Body is sown in dishonour, and raised in Glory*; that is, a Brightness, and Lustre, and Majesty will over-spread those Bodies, which are here of a despicable, and mean Aspect; especially when they are committed to the Ground, with the pale, and frightful Visage of Death, which turns the fairest Countenance into a Spectacle of Blackness, and Horror: But in the Resurrection a fresh, and unperishing Beauty shall dwell upon the exalted Body; and then shall the Righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father; Mat. xiii. 43. they shall be surrounded with Beams of perpetual Light resting upon them: And such a Refulgency there was in the Face of Moses, when he came down from conversing with God in the Mount; and in the Transfiguration of Christ, when his Face did shine as the Sun, and his Raiment was white as the Light, Mat. xvii. 2. Again, *The Body is sown in Weakness, and raised in Power*; that is, those Indispositions, and Infirmities which beset the Flesh in our present Estate, and make it a dull, and sluggish, and cumberfom Lump, shall then be removed; and there shall be no Clogs and Fetters of the Soul, to obstruct her Operations. Here we are too sensible, how backward the Flesh is to obey the Spirit: And even in our Approaches to God, we find a Heaviness and Deadness upon us from the Reluctancy of it; and we are soon tir'd even by the best Performances: But the glorify'd Body will be an equal Companion to the Soul, and nimbly execute whatever is fitting for it, and fly with the Wings of an Angel upon any superiour Call, and join with unwearied Delight in the never-ceasing Work of the Saints, and in the Adorations of God. Lastly, *The Body which is sown is Natural*; that is, invested with such Faculties, and Appetites, and Inclinations, as are peculiarly fitted to this lower World; but it is raised a *Spiritual Body*; that is, adorn'd with Celestial Qualities, and accommodated to that

that Divine Employment, which is to entertain us everlastingly in the next Life. Here the unruly, headstrong Body is very difficult to be manag'd; but when it shall be Spiritualiz'd, and purified, and adapted to the Joys of Heaven, it will be at perfect Amity with the Soul, and run'd for ever to the Hallelujahs of the Spirits above.

IX. This is that Blessedness which is to inspire us with Vigour in all the Exercises of a Christian Life, and to prepare us with Alacrity for a Christian Death: But lest it should be objected, that this is not an adequate Encouragement in our Fears, and Losses, and Calamities; for if we must wait for Happiness, till the Second Coming of our Lord, and the Reassumption of our Bodies; *What is there to rebate the Apprehensions of Death? Why should we not be unwilling to quit our present Satisfactions, for those which are not to come till after a long, and uncertain Period? and What Ground is there of Thanks to God for the Departure of our Friends?* For the preventing of such Objections, I shall subjoin this Consideration to what hath been said; That Righteous Souls depart from hence into a State of Felicity. We cannot trace the Motions of the naked Soul, nor see the Angels that conduct it: But an intelligent and immortal Substance, wherever it is, must undoubtedly have a suitable Habitation, and live, and think, and contemplate; and probably with more Freedom, and Vivacity, than in these Cottages of Clay. But to suppose it in a slumbering, and unactive Estate; and much more to suspect the vanishing of it, is to degrade our selves below the Conceptions of the Heathen World, and to resist the Natural Impressions of Conscience: *Natura ipsa de Immortalitate Animorum tacita judicat*, saith the Roman Oratour Cicero. Wherefore we justly believe, That the Spirits of Righteous Men are in some active, and joyful Repose; sensible of their present Bliss, and expecting fuller Degrees of it: They know themselves to be deliver'd from the Troubles, and Sorrows of Mortality, from the Tossings of the World, and the Entanglements of Sin; they enjoy God with more Familiarity, than they could here in the most exalted Raptures of Devotion; and looking beyond the Circle of Time, they behold a brighter Eternity moving towards them, and a Triumph of Glory preparing for them: And then how can we doubt of their having a present Reward? How can we attend upon them, and not congratulate their Joy? What Communication they have with us, God hath been pleased to hide from us, and probably to prevent our Addresses to them: But we may presume their Love towards us is equally enlarg'd with the rest of their Graces; and possibly they * intercede for us, though not in a *Sacerdotal* Way, (as Christ alone can do) yet in the Way of *Charity*, as Members of the same Body with us. We acknowledge to God in our Publick Prayers, *That the Spirits of just Men made perfect do live with him, after they are deliver'd from their earthly Prisons; and the Souls of them that sleep in the Lord Jesus, are receiv'd into the Heavenly Habitations, and enjoy perpetual Felicity: And if Lazarus was carried to Abraham's Bosom; Luke xvi. 22. if the Penitent Thief went from the Cross with our Saviour into Paradise; Luke xxiii. 43. if St. Stephen had reason to pray, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit; Acts vii. 59. if the Apostle was willing to depart, that he might immediately be with Christ; Phil. i. 23. and if the Souls of the Martyrs are under the Heavenly Altar, cloathed in white Robes, Rev. vi. 9, 10, 11. and communicating with God; then we may be confident of the delightful Rest of † Saints departed, and follow them with Acclamations to the Seat of Blessedness.*

X. This

Domini venerunt Cyprian. Ep. 37. edit. Oxon. Οἱ ἐν ἀγάπῃ τελειωθέντες ἔχουσιν χάριν ἐννοεῖν. Clem. Alex. l. 4. Τὸν ἀγαπῶν ἡμῶν ὑπερὸς ὑπὸ Νέστορι, μικρὸν ἀναμείνωμαι, καὶ Συνεσμίμει τοῦ ποθυμῶν. Basil. Ep. 188.

* Αἱ τῶν σπουδαίων ἡμῶν ἀγίων ψυχῶν Συνελχόνται. Orig. de Orat. S. 24. Αἱ ψυχῶν τῶν πιστευουσῶν διακαίῃ πρὸς τὸν ἐν χριστῷ ἀγαπῶν ἀμαρτιῶν. Id. Ex. ad Al. v. 192. Δεήσας συνεχοῖ. σπασβόται δὲ αὐτῶν πατὴρ. Basil. Hom. 20. Ἀξιόπνοι καὶ οὐκ ἀσπνέτω ἡμεῖς. Θεόκλητος. Greg. 8. Orat. in XL. Mart. Speramus quod liberis suis apud Christum praesul, afficiat. Ambros. de obit. Theodof. Pro te Dominum rogat, mihi-que veniam impetrat peccatorum. Hieron. Ep. 25.

† Confecto itinere virtutis, ac fidei, ad complexum & osculum

fruitur

X. This is the proper Consolation for us, upon parting with that excellent Man, in whose Place I now stand; who was so well known and respected in this Audience, that it would be Vanity in me to offer at his Character, unless I could praise him in his own Eloquence: And yet before we leave him in the House of Silence, it may justly be expected that I should do some right to his Memory, and enforce some instructive Lessons from his great Example. In doing so, I shall not pretend to draw the Lines of his History, nor mention any common, and undistinguishing Attainments, nor use any Art in setting him forth; but with a Simplicity fit for this Place, and suitable to his unaffected Life, I shall briefly consider him in these two Heads; his *Private Virtues*, and his *Services* for the Church. He had many Vertues of no ordinary Growth: And we may call them to mind, by reviewing his much applauded Work of the *Christian Life*: Which he intended to Continue, and Perfect, if Providence had not put a Stop to his useful Design, first by a long Craziness, and then by taking him suddenly from us. Next to his Piety towards God, his *Social Vertues* (as his own Distinction is) were those for which we shall be most sensible of our Loss in him; for his Kindness, and Humanity, and amicable Disposition, and Affability, and Pleasantness of Temper, and Condescension, and Sincerity, and readiness to do all good Offices for any that had recourse to him. In helping others, and laying out for their Advantage the Authority which he had gain'd; in giving Counsel, and Directions; and in Cementing Amity and Peace, he exhausted very much of his Time; and delighted as much in doing any Friendly Turn, as if the Profit had redounded to himself. In Works of Mercy he took a peculiar Pleasure; and did as zealously promote them, as if he had reliev'd himself by supporting the Poor: He was a Common Father to the Persecuted, and afflicted; and the *Brethren*, and *Strangers*, whose Bowels he hath refresh'd, *will bear Witness of his Charity before the Church*; 3 John v. 6. Friendship is one of the noblest Ornaments of Human Nature; and if God himself is Love, 1 John iv. 16. 'tis the Portraiture of God drawn upon the Soul: And for this Vertue he was exceedingly valu'd by those that were intimate with him; he was not infected with any of those Vices which blast it, with Pride, or Meritiveness, or Envy, or Selfishness; his Inclinations were to refresh and cherish all Men, and only to neglect himself; his Doors, and his Heart were open to all; and he hath left behind him the indelible Commendation of a true, and steadfast, and faithful Friend.

XI. Again, Let us look upon him in his Publick Character; and if *they that be wise shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever, and ever*; Dan. xii. 3. we may be humbly confident of his having a proportionable Reward. His Education happen'd to be in the Times of Confusion, and yet without any Detriment to him: For he imbib'd the Principles of that renown'd *University* in which he was bred, and not of the Men who then govern'd it; the same good Spirit, that call'd him thither from another Employment, directing him what to do: And when the Church was cover'd in Ruins, he discern'd her Beauty; and receiv'd Holy Orders from one of those ejected *Confessors*, who during the Devastation did secretly preserve the Apostolical Discipline. His Appearance in the World was early; and as God had furnish'd him with extraordinary Talents, and had enabled him to improve them well, and to possess Abilities equal to his high Profession; the same Divine Goodness chose a fitting Theatre for them to be manifested upon. His Eloquent, and Solid,

Fruitur nunc Theodosius luce perpetua, tranquillitate diuturna, & munerationis divinae fructibus gratulatur. Ambros. de obit. Theod. Testor Jesum, quem Beatrix nunc sequitur; testor sanctos angelos, quorum consortio fruitur. Hieron. Ep. 25.

and

and Fervent Preaching commanded the Applauses of Men; and his Constancy in it procur'd their Love: And though his Frequency in this Work, and his Diligence in his Pastoral Charge, and his Industry in resolving Cases of Conscience, and his restless Application to the Labours of his Calling, wasted him by Degrees; yet he could not be satisfy'd without doing his Duty: And that which sent him the sooner to God, will enlarge his Recompence from him. He ran his Course in Times of great Trial, and Discrimination; and in all of them he approv'd his Inflexible, and uncorrupted Integrity; and adher'd steadfastly to the Principles of our Church: And they will carry a Man safely through all Difficulties, and all Revolutions; and though it should be his Lot to be revil'd, and oppress'd by Men, yet he cannot be dejected in Conscience, nor forsaken by God. He own'd it for his Rule, in all Vicissitudes to keep a clean and quiet Conscience; as knowing that this would be a Sanctuary, when all earthly Comforts should fail: And he remember'd the wise Maxim, *He that observeth the Wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the Clouds shall not reap*: Eccl. xi. 4. And therefore without minding the Weather, or taking Directions from the Sky, he went on directly in his Calling; and made it his Business to *sow to the Spirit*, that he might *of the Spirit reap Life Everlasting*, Gal. vi. 8. When Popery invaded our Establish'd Religion, he was one of those worthy Champions that defended it with an upright Zeal: They held up their Shields together, and united their Counsels, and Endeavours as one Man: They saw their *Diocesan* (whom they mightily honour'd) singled out for the first Sacrifice, because he would not surrender them; they saw the *Roman Eagle* advancing every Day, and fresh Attempts made to demolish our Church; and then it was that by Preaching, and Praying, and Writing, they gain'd an Universal Esteem, and supported our Holy Religion. In this Cause our Friend whom we are waiting upon, did Cordially concur with his Brethren; and was prepar'd to suffer as much as any of them. He understood our *Constitution* entirely, and that made him the more hearty in asserting it upon all Occasions; and (I trust) there is no Man here but Honours his Memory the more for being so: For though our Enemies have branded us for this Constancy, and have been sowing Divisions, and putting ignominious Marks of Distinction between us; we cannot be so blind, as not to see the Artifice is contriv'd, in order to the more easie Subversion of all of us: And if a resolute Adherence to well-chosen Principles; if to defend that *Liturgy*, which we have solemnly testify'd our Approbation of in the Presence of God; if to be firm to our *Subscriptions*, and to our *Vows of Ordination*; if to contend for the *Faith once deliver'd unto the Saints*, Jude iii. and for that *Government* by which we were consecrated to the Service of the Church, and which we believe to have been transmitted down to us from the Apostles; if this be a Reproach, I fear, it will soon be counted a Reproach to be a Christian. Our deceased Brother did therefore upon all Emergencies maintain an unspotted Fidelity to the Church; and acted consonantly to what he had professed concerning it, in these Words: *Whatsoever her Fate may be, I am chain'd to her Fortunes by my Reason, and Conscience; and shall ever esteem it more eligible to be crush'd in Pieces by her Fall, which God avert, than to flourish and triumph on her Ruins.* This Resolution he kept to the last, and still with a peaceful, and charitable Spirit; and without aiming at his own Interest through that of the Church: For when Offers were made to him of higher Stations in the Church, he declin'd them, upon the Sense of Decays creeping upon him; and he rejoyc'd more in the Advancement of other worthy Men, than he would have done in his own. His inherent Greatness wanted no outward Accessions; and the Preferment he was ambitious of, was to go from his Flock *unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls*, 1 Pet. ii. 25.

Epist. Ded. to the
Bishop of London.

XII. Under his Protection, and Custody let us now leave him: And let us pray to God, to raise up new Instruments of his Glory; and to send forth more *Labourers into his Harvest*, Mat. ix. 38. for those whom he hath call'd Home to receive their Wages. In him whom we now attend we have lost one, whom many of us respected as an Instructor, an Oracle, a Father to us; but we have still an Eternal, and Unchangeable God; and he can compensate all our Losses; he can create Workmen, as well as appoint their Work; and he can say to the most unqualified of us, as he did to *Joshua*; *As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*, Josh. i. 5. For a Conclusion, I shall add one word to you, in *Ministring* to whom this Servant of God ended his Race: He came to you in his declining Years, and with the Disadvantage of succeeding one of the most eminent Persons of our Church; and yet you honour'd, and lov'd him; and thought you still enjoy'd his *Great Predecessor*: And therefore if I were to speak in his Name, it would be to return Thanks for your Kindnesses to him: But acting by a higher Commission, I shall rather desire you to express your Respect to his Memory, by obeying those good Instructions, which he brought from our Common Master, to whom he is gone; and to remember the Word of God, which he hath spoken unto you; and to follow his Faith, considering the End of his Conversation, Heb. xiii. 7.

Which happy End God in his infinite Goodness grant to us all, through the Merits, and Mediation of Christ Jesus our Lord, and Saviour. Amen.

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119	67	2	212	ibid.		2	153	1	24	2	472	2	8	1	198
119	68	1	645	Malah.				1	24	2	472	2	1, &c	1	198
ibid.		2	297	1	2, &c	2	67	1	24	2	472	2	5	1	198
ibid.		2	307	1	11	1	209	1	24	2	472	2	8	1	198

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Malachi.				Matthew.				Matthew.				Luke.			
3		1	427	12 13		1	509	ibid.		1	517	ibid.		1	258
ibid.		3	434	12 15		1	61	ibid.		2	500	ibid.		1	344
ibid.		2	465	12 25		2	145	28 19		1	358	ibid.		1	679
Ecclesiasticus.				12 25, &c		1	62	ibid.		1	499	ibid.		2	484
50 15, &c		1	412	12 28		1	361	28 19, &c		1	96	11 23		2	199
1 Maccabees.				12 31		1	361	ibid.		2	507	12 11		1	366
8 32		1	408	12 30		1	513	28 20		1	367	12 15		1	24
10 61		1	408	13		2	230	ibid.		1	507	12 47		2	246
11 25		1	408	13 19, &c		1	659	ibid.		1	519	ibid.		2	431
2 Maccabees.				13 24		2	18	Mark.				14 25, &c		2	233
7 23		2	478	13 27		1	542	1 .7		2	449	14 28		1	77
Matthew.				13 38		1	442	2 17		1	511	15		2	233
1 20, &c		1	463	13 41, &c		1	540	3 13, &c		1	485	15 10		1	466
1 21		1	703	13 42		2	345	6 2, &c		2	499	ibid.		1	678
2 2		1	435	ibid.		2	414	7 8, &c		1	513	15 16		2	[409]
2 13, &c		1	463	ibid.		2	419	7 12		1	60	15 17		2	173
2 28		1	251	ibid.		2	440	8 12		1	562	16 22		1	467
3 8		2	162	15 3, &c		1	513	8 38		1	469	ibid.		2	[409]
3 11		2	449	15 24		1	423	9 9		2	500	16 22, &c		1	518
3 12		2	345	16 16		1	447	9 44		2	440	16 23		2	440
3 16		1	379	16 18, &c		1	442	10 33		1	306	16 26		1	125
ibid.		2	490	16 19		1	504	12 30		2	383	18 19		1	282
4 10		2	130	16 24		2	214	12 42		1	640	19 10		1	511
4 10 &c		1	460	16 26		2	[401]	13 37		1	105	19 16, &c		1	509
4 23		2	467	16 27		2	462	14 31		1	473	20 36		2	363
5		1	14	17 2		1	538	14 33		1	461	21 11		1	536
5 28		1	508	18 8		2	356	16 14		1	503	22 3		1	472
5 45		1	251	18 10		1	464	ibid.		2	570	22 19		1	115
5 48		1	212	ibid.		2	[409]	ibid.		2	57	22 40		1	462
6 1		1	99	18 16, &c		1	504	16 20		1	570	22 41		2	130
6 1, &c		1	508	ibid.		1	505	ibid.		2	57	22 42		2	202
ibid.		1	638	19 5		1	597	Luke.				22 44		1	461
6 4, &c		1	101	19 17		2	356	1 10		1	501	22 53		1	460
6 6		1	260	19 21		1	643	1 13		1	463	23 43		1	8
6 7		1	99	19 28		1	505	1 17, &c		1	461	ibid.		2	362
6 10		2	494	20 28		1	400	1 23		1	501	24 23, &c		1	503
6 19		1	128	20 28, &c		2	234	2 13		1	458	24 39, &c		1	564
6 33		1	2	20 31		1	442	3 16		2	449	24 49		1	361
7 7		1	82	20 31		1	442	ibid.		2	500	ibid.		1	362
7 12		1	582	20 31		1	442	3 18		2	326	24 52		1	356
7 13		2	345	20 31		1	442	3 22		1	361	John.			
7 18		2	240	20 31		1	442	ibid.		1	379	1 1		1	351
7 21		1	15	20 31		1	442	ibid.		2	490	1 4		2	455
ibid.		1	513	20 31		1	442	4 1		1	351	1 9		2	456
ibid.		2	137	20 31		1	442	ibid.		1	380	1 14		1	349
8 29		1	460	20 31		1	442	4 18, &c		1	380	ibid.		1	556
9 2		1	436	20 31		1	442	4 22		2	497	ibid.		2	449
9 37		2	491	20 31		1	442	6 13		1	485	1 18		1	352
10 5, &c		1	423	20 31		1	442	6 36		1	412	ibid.		1	378
10 10		1	20	20 31		1	442	6 36		1	649	ibid.		1	431
ibid.		1	60	20 31		1	442	7 16		1	377	1 33		1	380
10 22		1	25	20 31		1	442	7 30		2	162	ibid.		2	495
10 28		2	[413]	20 31		1	442	8 12		2	423	1 49		1	435
10 33		2	427	20 31		1	442	8 12, &c		1	77	2 11		1	380
11 20, &c		1	678	20 31		1	442	8 15		1	90	ibid.		2	491
11 21		1	259	20 31		1	442	9 1		1	460	2 19		1	562
11 28		2	5	20 31		1	442	9 16, &c		2	281	3 16		1	398
11 29		1	31	20 31		1	442	9 25		2	[401]	ibid.		2	325
ibid.		1	95	20 31		1	442	9 26		1	469	ibid.		2	346
11 30		1	440	20 31		1	442	ibid.		1	538	3 19		1	386
ibid.		2	286	20 31		1	442	9 29, &c		2	400	ibid.		2	244
ibid.		2	468	20 31		1	442	9 43		2	491	3 34		1	380
				20 31		1	442	9 55		2	11	3 36		2	355
				20 31		1	442	10 1		1	384	4 10		1	396
				20 31		1	442	ibid.		1	485	4 36		1	1
				20 31		1	442	10 9, &c		1	499	5 13		1	146
				20 31		1	442	10 16		1	96	5 14		2	63
				20 31		1	442	ibid.		1	517	5 20		2	506
				20 31		1	442	ibid.		2	84	5 21		1	423
				20 31		1	442	10 17		1	460	5 22		1	512
				20 31		1	442	10 19		2	496	ibid.		1	535
				20 31		1	442	11 13		1	82	5 23		2	479

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15	2	1	65	13	1	2	119	8	23	1	488	1	17	1	369
15	4	1	514	13	2	1	364	9	6	1	647	1	20,&c	1	442
ibid.		1	524	13	4,&c	1	56	ibid.		1	509	1	21	1	459
15	19	1	570	13	12	1	4	ibid.		2	338	ibid.		2	450
15	17	1	62	ibid.		2	359	ibid.		2	381	2	2	2	225
ibid.		1	135	13	13	2	119	9	7	1	639	ibid.		2	423
ibid.		1	453	ibid.		2	383	11	2	1	445	2	4	1	649
16	26	2	336	14	1	1	56	12	2	1	8	2	6	2	283
				14	20	1	26	12	2,&c	2	362	2	10	2	364
				14	29	1	499	12	7,&c	1	470	2	12	1	428
				14	34	1	449	13	2	1	505	ibid.		1	515
				15		1	533	13	5	1	103	2	13	1	44
				15	1,&c	2	507	13	10	1	511	2	14	1	428
				15	3	1	397	ibid.		1	62	2	16	1	405
				15	5,&c	1	487	13	11	1	453	2	18	1	79
				15	9,&c	1	143	13	14	1	358	ibid.		1	413
				15	12,&c	1	524					2	19	1	17
				15	24,&c	1	549					ibid.		1	67
				15	51,&c	1	528					2	21,&c	1	136
				ibid.		1	542					ibid.		1	209
				15	52	1	540					2	24	2	331
				15	58	1	93					3	3,&c	2	526
				ibid.		1	125					3	12	1	413
				ibid.		1	138					3	14	2	130
				16	1	1	502					3	15	1	67
				16	2	1	641					3	17	1	637
				16	13	1	105					4	1	1	31
				16	14	1	56					4	2	1	513
												ibid.		1	623
												4	3	1	62
												ibid.		1	135
												4	4	1	367
												ibid.		1	454
												4	4,&c	1	448
												4	5,&c	1	444
												4	8	1	362
												ibid.		1	414
												ibid.		1	423
												ibid.		1	510
												4	11	1	485
												ibid.		2	83
												4	11,&c	1	450
												4	16	1	136
												4	19	2	245
												4	22,&c	2	2
												4	23	2	164
												ibid.		2	230
												4	24	1	43
												4	26	1	127
												4	28	1	107
												4	30	1	212
												ibid.		1	259
												4	31	1	26
												4	32	1	400
												ibid.		1	512
												ibid.		1	513

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ibid.		2	199	ibid.		1	529	6	17,&c	1	637	2	1	1	348
2	13	1	258	ibid.		1	537	6	18,&c	1	2	ibid.		1	359
2	15	1	130	ibid.		1	540	6	20	1	453	2	2	1	560
2	19	1	65	4	17	1	7	ibid.		2	88	ibid.		2	463
2	25	1	488	ibid.		1	532					2	5	1	459
3	1	1	39	ibid.		1	540	2 Timothy.				2	7,&c	1	519
3	11	1	551	ibid.		1	544	1	5	2	523	ibid.		1	549
3	13,&c	1	138	ibid.		2	360	1	6	1	96	2	9	2	329
3	19	1	128	5	6	1	105	1	10	2	356	2	12	1	349
3	20	1	17	5	8	1	113	1	13	1	453	2	14	1	462
4	1	1	91	5	12	1	132	ibid.		2	88	2	16	2	458
4	4	1	39	ibid.		1	484	2	1	1	92	2	17	2	333
ibid.		1	111	5	12,&c	1	96	2	2	2	88	3	7	1	357
4	6	1	82	5	13	1	62	2	4	1	118	3	13	1	128
				5	14	1	65	2	12	2	427	ibid.		1	626
				5	16	1	11	2	24	2	16	ibid.		1	629
				5	17	1	36	2	25,&c	1	625	3	14	1	125
				ibid.		1	82	2	26	1	470	3	17,&c	1	350
				5	19	1	259	3	2	2	214	3	19	1	518
				5	27	2	526	3	6	2	542	4	9,&c	2	358
				2 Thessalonians.				3	15	2	508	4	13	1	101
				1	7	1	537	ibid.		2	523	ibid.		1	250
				ibid.		1	539	3	16	1	369	4	14,&c	1	419
				1	8	1	538	ibid.		2	534	4	15	1	350
				ibid.		1	547	4	1	1	535	4	16	1	82
				1	8,&c	2	429	4	10	1	128	ibid.		1	680
				1	9	2	345	Titus.				5	1	1	389
				2	10,&c	2	549	1	5	1	96	5	4	2	475
				2	12	1	615	ibid.		1	488	5	10	1	388
				2	14	1	2	ibid.		1	502	5	19,&c	1	626
				2	15	2	510	ibid.		1	503	6	1,&c	1	506
				3	8,&c	1	107	1	16	2	214	6	4,&c	1	150
				1 Timothy.				ibid.		2	428	6	10	1	647
				1	5	2	119	2	9,&c	1	599	6	11	1	146
				1	6	1	503	2	11	2	2	6	12	1	94
				1	16	1	1	ibid.		2	229	7	2	1	207
				1	19	1	141	ibid.		2	514	7	3	1	411
				ibid.		2	540	2	11,&c	1	674	7	11	1	389
				1	20	1	505	2	12	1	13	7	13	2	469
				2	4	1	255	ibid.		1	207	7	13,&c	1	388
				2	5	1	78	2	12,&c	1	703	7	16	2	476
				ibid.		1	341	2	13	1	2	7	19	2	471
				ibid.		1	454	2	14	1	395	7	22	1	81
				2	5,&c	1	395	ibid.		1	400	ibid.		1	344
				2	11,&c	1	489	ibid.		1	615	7	24	1	410
				3	2	2	85	ibid.		2	405	7	25	1	79
				3	12	2	87	2	15	1	489	ibid.		1	341
				3	14,&c	1	489	3	5	1	488	ibid.		1	410
				3	16	1	352	ibid.		2	239	ibid.		1	414
				ibid.		2	458	3	5,&c	1	361	ibid.		2	451
				4	1	1	120	3	10	1	489	7	26	1	396
				4	2	1	245	ibid.		1	505	8	2	2	473
				ibid.		2	430	3	11	1	453	8	3	1	389
				4	8	2	119	Hebrews.				8	5	2	505
				4	11	1	489	1	2	1	351	8	6	1	314
				5	4,&c	1	489	ibid.		1	355	8	12	1	513
				5	7	1	502	ibid.		1	360	9	7,&c	2	332
				5	17	1	132	ibid.		1	248	9	9	2	469
				ibid.		1	484	1	3	1	422	9	10	2	476
				ibid.		1	489	ibid.		1	422	9	12	1	393
				5	19	1	489	ibid.		2	450	9	13	1	397
				5	19,&c	1	505	ibid.		2	457	9	13,&c	1	392
				5	22	1	489	1	6	1	464	ibid.		1	398
				ibid.		1	503	1	8	1	350	9	14,&c	1	703
				6	5	1	453	ibid.		1	347	9	15	1	344
				6	9,&c	1	128	1	9	2	395	ibid.		1	395
				6	10	2	542	ibid.		1	457	9	22,&c	1	427
				6	12	1	76	1	12	1	457	9	23	2	79
				6	13	1	384	ibid.		2	457	9	24	1	79
				ibid.		1	529	1	14	1	459	ibid.		1	393
				6	15	1	442	ibid.		1	675	ibid.		2	408
				6	17	1	52	ibid.		2	[409]	ibid.		2	472
				1 Thessalonians.								10	1	1	409
				2	12	1	442					9	25	1	410
				2	13	1	37					9	25,&c	1	410
				3	8	2	357					9	27	1	140
				3	13	1	539					10	1	1	393
				4	1	1	138					ibid.		2	473
				4	3	1	15								
				ibid.		2	222								
				4	6	1	60								
				4	10,&c	1	107								
				4	15	1	541								
				4	16	1	469								

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ibid.		2	508	2	26	1	515	1	7	1	395	ibid.		1	497
10	4	2	469	4	1	2	145	1	9	1	512	2	1	1	497
10	5, &c	1	392	4	4	1	128	ibid.		1	90	2	2	1	505
10	7	1	411	4	6, &c	1	679	ibid.		1	513	2	5	1	518
10	10	1	410	ibid.		2	183	1	31	2	453	ibid.		2	194
10	12	1	409	4	7	1	47	2	1	1	79	2	7	1	520
ibid.		1	414	ibid.		1	466	ibid.		1	408	2	8	1	424
ibid.		1	422	4	8	1	82	2	1, &c	1	356	ibid.		2	427
10	19, &c	1	413	ibid.		2	199	ibid.		2	524	2	9	1	441
10	21	2	450	4	14	1	140	2	2, &c	2	329	2	10	1	125
10	21, &c	2	419	ibid.		2	78	2	5	2	383	ibid.		1	344
ibid.		2	353	4	17	2	246	2	15	1	128	ibid.		1	471
10	22	1	141	ibid.		2	430	ibid.		1	23	ibid.		1	520
ibid.		1	146	5	8	1	91	ibid.		2	392	2	11	2	345
10	26	2	246	5	20	1	144	2	20	1	370	2	13	1	499
ibid.		2	433					2	25	1	1	2	21	1	190
10	29	1	405					2	29	1	212	2	21, &c	1	518
10	35	1	92					3	2	1	5	2	23	1	347
10	36	1	92					ibid.		1	696	2	25	1	125
10	38	1	148					ibid.		2	359	3	7	1	504
10	38, &c	2	427					ibid.		2	360	3	10	1	519
11		1	76					3	4	1	512	3	16	1	518
11	1	1	92					3	7	2	228	3	21	1	154
ibid.		1	308					3	8	1	207	ibid.		1	414
11	3	1	351					ibid.		2	2	ibid.		1	423
ibid.		2	456					3	9	2	230	ibid.		1	520
11	6	1	220					ibid.		2	239	4	4	1	501
11	10	1	426					3	14, &c	1	146	4	8	2	346
11	13	1	128					3	15	1	588	5	6	1	459
11	14, &c	1	2					3	16	1	400	5	8	1	412
ibid.		1	114					3	17	1	644	5	9	2	361
11	35	2	478					4	9	2	327	5	9, &c	1	535
12	2	1	113					4	10	1	401	5	10	1	501
ibid.		1	376					ibid.		2	333	5	12	1	422
12	4, &c	1	425					4	16	1	56	6	15	1	479
12	14	1	62					4	19	2	373	7	14	2	442
ibid.		1	73					5	1	2	336	7	15	2	346
ibid.		1	516					5	3	2	271	7	16, &c	2	358
ibid.		2	137					ibid.		2	286	8	3	1	412
12	15	2	469					ibid.		2	335	ibid.		1	413
12	22, &c	1	7					ibid.		2	335	11	15	1	442
ibid.		2	361					ibid.		2	380	12	7	1	458
12	24	1	344					5	4	1	76	12	7, &c	1	465
ibid.		1	393					ibid.		1	658	12	10	1	471
ibid.		1	615					ibid.		2	340	14	11	2	345
ibid.		2	451					5	8	1	384	ibid.		2	419
12	26	1	432					5	13	2	508	ibid.		2	440
13	5	1	24					5	19	2	328	14	13	1	520
13	10, &c	1	392					5	20	1	350	15	3	1	610
13	11, &c	1	396									19	10	1	430
13	14	1	2									19	13	2	498
ibid.		1	140									20	1, &c	1	471
ibid.		2	78									20	10	2	345
13	15	1	37									ibid.		2	240
13	16	1	637									20	11	1	542
13	17	1	65									ibid.		1	547
ibid.		1	97									20	12	1	545
ibid.		1	484									20	13	1	526
ibid.		1	511									20	13, &c	1	534
ibid.		2	88									20	14	2	345
13	20	1	405									21	3, &c	2	463
												21	7, &c	2	345
												21	8	1	534
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